CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 3 June 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed-Salah Dembri (Algeria)

GE.99-62150 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 826th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, on behalf of us all, I should like to extend a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Brazil to the Conference, Ambassador Celso Amorim. Many of us here know him, many of us are honoured to be his friends, and that is also true of the current President of the Conference on Disarmament. I believe that Ambassador Amorim needs no introduction. Some of us will recall that he has already represented his country at the Conference, which he chaired in January 1993. He was then appointed as his country's Minister for Foreign Affairs, then Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. Just recently he occupied the Chair of the United Nations Security Council, and in particular the Commission entrusted with disarmament issues and monitoring and verification concerning Iraq, with the distinction and diplomatic talent we all know he possesses. I would not wish to offend his modesty by saying that he has participated in many brainstorming sessions on the major problems relating to disarmament throughout the world. I am sure that the Conference will be able once again to benefit from the extensive experience he brings with him.

On my list of speakers for today I have the representatives of the United States of America, Pakistan and Hungary. I call on the representative of the United States, Ambassador Grey, to take the floor.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): Mr. President, at the outset, may I express my personal pleasure and that of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference? We look forward to working with you as you carry out the vital task of getting the CD back to work, a task in which I can assure you of our full support.

I am taking the floor today to respond to certain political issues raised by the distinguished representative of China during his last two plenary interventions. In his statements, he raised the issue of military actions taking place in Serbia. He condemned NATO for "flagrant military intervention against a sovereign State" and accused it of creating the humanitarian crisis in the region. That's wrong. Let's get the sequence right: it was not NATO actions that brought about the humanitarian crisis in the region; it was the humanitarian crisis, generated through the deliberate and inhumane policies of the Serbian Government, that brought about NATO actions. I note that the Chinese statements did not mention the hundreds of thousands of refugees made homeless and worse by those appalling policies. Similarly, China's statements did not recognize or appreciate the humanitarian impulses which brought about NATO actions in the region, nor the fact that many world leaders have supported those actions and lauded the principled stand taken by NATO countries.

Since the last Chinese statement on 27 May, the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal has indicted the leader of Serbia for war crimes and has issued arrest warrants for him and three other senior Serbian officials. This indictment stands as one of the strongest affirmations to date for the actions undertaken by NATO countries to end the humanitarian crisis caused by Serbian

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policies. The indictment firmly upholds the principle that States do not have the right to act with impunity in ways that violate humanitarian law and the human rights of their own or others' citizens, a principle that the United States has always supported, and which it will continue to support. As a citizen of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I note that this is what Lexington, Saratoga and Gettysburg were all about, and it is worth recalling this, especially today.

On another topic, the Chinese statement claimed that the United States has breached the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty by "announcing its decision to accelerate the research and development of missile defence systems". This is not correct. This research and development does not conflict with ABM Treaty provisions. As for deployment, the United States will not make a decision until the year 2000 or thereafter. In any event, the ABM Treaty remains a cornerstone of strategic stability for the United States and we are committed to continued efforts to strengthen the treaty and to enhance its viability and effectiveness.

Further strategic stability could be achieved were this Conference to proceed to negotiate a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. All United Nations Member States and NPT parties are committed to this task. It serves no purpose to create linkages which suggest that all the items we are considering have equal support in the Conference. This is not conducive either to the Conference's work or to its reputation as an effective multilateral negotiating body. The Conference should focus on the business at hand and do what we have all agreed to do. It would be both wise and prudent to leave alone the larger political issues which are not within this Conference's mandate. This has traditionally been the spirit in which the CD has worked to achieve the multilateral negotiating goals desired by the international community. I hope we can proceed in this spirit now and get back to work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are confident that your consummate diplomatic skills and renowned sagacity will impart a new impetus to our efforts at finding a balanced programme of work for the Conference. I would also like to express our deep appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Nguyen Quy Binh of Viet Nam, who worked with sincerity and diligence to advance the work of the Conference. I also join you in extending a warm welcome to the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil.

We must continue to hope that this Conference's greatest achievements in promoting disarmament and arms control are ahead and not behind us. The post-cold-war period offered a golden opportunity to advance the United Nations Charter's goals of collectively realizing stable peace and

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security and significant progress towards nuclear and conventional disarmament. There have been some significant achievements. Several agreements have been concluded, including the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. Yet the focus has unfortunately remained limited to measures of nuclear non-proliferation. Complete nuclear disarmament remains, for the present, a "bridge too far".

Pakistan is concerned that recent developments may signify that the "golden opportunities" of the post-cold-war era may be ending. The past few months have witnessed a significant deterioration in the relations between the major global Powers. It is evident that in the capitals of two of these Powers considerable concern exists about the danger of unilateralism, domination and use of force emanating from the "sole super-Power".

Secondly, the determination in some circles to abrogate or erode the ABM Treaty, the launching of the companion programmes for national missile defence and theatre missile defence and the pursuit of new military technologies and weapons for deployment and use in outer space threaten to scuttle existing strategic nuclear arms control agreements, including START-II, and the prospects for further reductions in strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. On the contrary, the development and deployment of ABM and TMD systems may generate a new spiral - quantitative and qualitative - in a multipolar nuclear arms race.

Thirdly, the adoption of a renewed "Strategic Concept" by a regional military alliance - despite the declared end of the cold war - is bound to generate considerable concern in the wide spectrum of nuclear and non-nuclear States. This "Strategic Concept" asserts that nuclear weapons provide "the supreme guarantee of security of the allies". "Uncertain" and "unforeseen" future threats are offered as the rationale for maintaining huge arsenals of nuclear weapons. Among them is an inflated concern about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Military attacks are justified against such capabilities of other States. And, it is asserted that the allies will ensure uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the nature of their response to military aggression. Such threats, including the possible use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapons States, represent an erosion of even the conditional negative security assurances offered to the non-nuclear-weapon States under resolutions 255 and 984 of the Security Council.

While Pakistan is not a party to the NPT, it seems to us that the operational "sharing" of nuclear weapons between nuclear and non-nuclear members of this alliance, reaffirmed by the Strategic Concept, constitutes a violation of the NPT's most basic obligations, set out in articles I and II of the Treaty. And the expansion of this military alliance also represents de facto horizontal nuclear proliferation. The double standards of some of the crusaders for the NPT's "nuclear world" are now even more evident.

Finally, the rest of the world cannot but be extremely disturbed by the references in the new "Strategic Concept" to new and unprecedented missions which can be conducted without recourse to the provisions of the United Nations Charter. This is contrary to Article 53 of the United Nations

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Charter, which states explicitly that "... no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council ...". The only exception was made in the case of "enemy States", which do not exist any longer.

No State, or group of States, can assume the licence as a matter of standing policy to use force against other States. Unless these assertions of unilateralism are formally qualified or rescinded, they could unravel the entire concept of "collective security" which is the basis set out in the United Nations Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The three concerns I have mentioned should be considered in the Conference on Disarmament under the items on nuclear disarmament, outer space and negative security assurances, respectively.

The proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament cannot remain impervious to the international political and strategic environment. This has always been so. It is disingenuous to express surprise at the difficulties encountered this year in arriving at an agreement on the CD's work programme, especially if there is no desire to ensure that it is a balanced and comprehensive work programme.

Mr. President, as you endeavour to promote such a comprehensive and balanced programme of work for the Conference, it is clear that intensive consultations will be required to address two critical issues on the CD's agenda, namely, nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space.

In document CD/1570, the Group of 21 submitted a draft programme of work envisaging the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. This did not prove acceptable to a few member States. We do not accept the assertion that the Conference cannot advance beyond the so-called "delicate compromises" of 1998. The consultative "troika" mechanism of last year was designed to advance the prospects for the establishment of an appropriate negotiating mechanism on nuclear disarmament. Last year's arrangement was not meant to keep the issue of nuclear disarmament in a permanent state of limbo. The "troika" mechanism has outlived its utility. The CD must now devote more serious attention to nuclear disarmament.

In a spirit of compromise and flexibility the Group of 21 accepted the suggestion put forward by the distinguished Ambassador of Venezuela, in his capacity as CD President, to establish a working group on nuclear disarmament with an appropriate mandate. It may be recalled that the proposal for a working group emanated from five Western Group members. By accepting the mechanism proposed by these five countries, the Group of 21 demonstrated its flexibility and constructive desire to advance the work of the Conference. It was understood that an appropriate mandate for the working group could be agreed through further consultations. It is regrettable that this avenue for promoting compromise was not actively pursued. My delegation believes that as a first step towards meaningful negotiations on nuclear disarmament, the

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mechanism of a working group represents the least common denominator and agreement on this mechanism should be promoted through further Presidential consultations.

Pakistan remains committed to its agreement to commence negotiations within the CD on a fissile materials treaty. It is unfortunate that, apart from the retrenchment of agreed bilateral arrangements, even the consensus evolved on this issue has been reopened in some recent proposals. We have agreed to early commencement of the FMT negotiations. But its early conclusion cannot be guaranteed in view of the continuing differences regarding the scope of the treaty. The creation of permanent ad hoc committees, in any case, is contrary to the rules of procedure of the Conference. If the FMT consensus is to be reopened, Pakistan would also seek inclusion of the concerns reflected in the amendments we proposed to the Canadian resolution on the FMT in the United Nations General Assembly.

In my statement here on 25 February 1999, I outlined the reasons why Pakistan believes that the item on outer space requires urgent attention in this Conference. As in the case of the FMT, the General Assembly also adopted a resolution without a vote envisaging the creation of an ad hoc committee on outer space. We do not comprehend the reasons which prevent the CD from creating an ad hoc committee to address this issue seriously. It is surely disingenuous to say that since there is at present no arms race in outer space, there is no need for an ad hoc committee. Should we wait until such an arms race is commenced? We my not have to wait too long.

Following on the plans formulated by the "stewards for military space" to which I referred in my statement last February, updated blueprints designed to achieve "full-spectrum dominance" in the twenty-first century have now been proposed. Together with other revolutionary military technologies, covering every aspect of modern-day armaments, recommendations have been made for a constellation of space-based lasers to provide global coverage for an array of space-orbiting vehicles which could unleash high-density kinetic energy weapons on ground targets. We believe that efforts towards militarization of outer space, or deployment of other weapon systems relying on a space dimension, will create new and dangerous instabilities. They would deal a serious blow to efforts for nuclear disarmament and possibly lead to a new race for more lethal and dangerous weapon systems, including nuclear weapons.

Prevention is better than cure. This is so for nuclear non-proliferation as well as for the threat of weapons proliferation in outer space. The international community must take action now to prevent outer space from being transformed into the new arena in the quest for global dominance and hegemony.

Pakistan has already expressed its support to the proposal made by China, in document CD/1576, for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the item "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". We urge you, Mr. President, to hold Presidential consultations on this concrete and specific proposal with a view to evolving an agreed and substantive mandate for an ad hoc committee on outer space.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

We look forward to arly Presidential consultations to enable the CD to agree on a comprehensive nd balanced work programme reflecting the priorities of all countries and gro s.

It is a year, to th day, that the Conference on Disarmament held an unprecedented special session to address the implications of the nuclear tests in South Asia. Responding to the concerns voiced at that session, Pakistan in its statement said the following:

> "... it must be acknowledged that the danger of conflict between Pakistan and India, whether conventional or non-conventional, arises from the underlying dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. It will not be sufficient to ease tensions and sweep this burning problem once again under the carpet."

We went on to say:

> "India and Pakistan have been unable to resolve this problem bilaterally for 50 years. It is ... time that the international community took collective action to try to implement the United Nations Security Council resolutions on Kashmir. At the very least, it should evolve a political framework within which a solution for Kashmir can be found. It should give active support and impetus to future bilateral negotiations between Pakistan and India on Kashmir. It should not allow India to circumvent genuine negotiations on the Kashmir issue ...".

The P-5 communiqué and Security Council resolution 1172 did mention the need for a resolution of the Kashmir issue. Unfortunately, the international help and assistance to promote a solution that was promised by the major Powers has been less than forthcoming. In the subsequent bilateral dialogue between Pakistan and the United States, Kashmir and Pakistan-India relations was included as one of the five items on the agenda.

Pakistan believes that encouraging progress has been made in this bilateral dialogue with the United States. In response to positive gestures, we agreed to the FMT negotiations here in the CD. We took steps to augment our already robust export controls. We engaged in a substantive and constructive dialogue on strategic and missile restraint. We submitted a concrete proposal for a strategic restraint regime in South Asia. And, in the United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minster Nawaz Sharif recalled Pakistan's consistent support for the CTBT, and expressed our readiness to adhere to the Treaty "in conditions free from coercion and pressure". Our Prime Minster elaborated, by adding:

> "In this regard, we expect that the arbitrary restrictions imposed on Pakistan by multilateral institutions will be speedily removed. We also expect that discriminatory sanctions against Pakistan will be lifted. And we count on the full support of the world community for a just resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute."

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

Pakistan does not resile from its solemn commitments. Yet reciprocal agreements and understandings also need to be respected. The emplacement of deliberate roadblocks in removing the coercive environment cannot be helpful in advancing mutually agreed objectives. We trust that the positive momentum we had welcomed will be speedily restored. Let me also recall that as our Prime Minister emphasized in his address to the General Assembly, "on the nuclear issue, Pakistan will insist on the principle of equal treatment with India".

It is regrettable that while progress has been made in our dialogue with the United States on what has been called the four "legs" of the elephant, the problem of Kashmir has been treated as its "trunk" and, even worse, as its "tail". Fortunately, other parts of the anatomy were not mentioned. We have welcomed the help of our friends in securing a positive response from India to our Prime Minister's initiative to open a bilateral dialogue on Kashmir. An eight-point agenda, including Kashmir and peace and security, as well as negotiating mechanisms, were agreed. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif went further by inviting Prime Minister Vajpayee to Lahore and in promoting the Lahore Declaration and the accompanying Memorandum of Understanding. Pakistan submitted a concrete proposal for a strategic restraint and arms control regime in South Asia to India.

As the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated in her recent report on Kosovo: "Any durable solution to the crisis in Kosovo will have to be built on a solid foundation of respect for human rights ...". This is equally true for Kashmir.

Before, during and after the Lahore summit, Pakistan had appealed to India, directly and through the major Powers, to halt its campaign of repression and human rights violations in Kashmir. As Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz stated in the Commission on Human Rights on 7 April 1999, "it would be counter-productive for India to talk peace with Pakistan while it simultaneously pursues a war against the Kashmiri people".

India has deployed an occupation army of nearly 700,000 in Kashmir, which engages in "crackdowns" and killings every day. Over the past 10 years, over 50,000 innocent Kashmiris have been killed and an equal number maimed and injured. Thousands of Kashmiris languish in Indian jails and detention centres. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Kashmiri people should resist the Indian occupation and repression by all the means at their disposal and seek help from any quarter they can for their legitimate freedom struggle. As the distinguished Ambassador of the United States has just stated in his statement, there is a principle that States do not have the right to act with impunity in ways that violate humanitarian law and human rights.

The present crisis in Kashmir has been caused by India's overreaction to a military reversal in its Kashmir war, and by its effort to involve and attack Pakistan in an attempt to explain this reversal to its own public opinion. For the past several weeks, Indian forces have continued shelling our territory across the Line of Control. Repeated ground attacks are being launched every day against Pakistani posts on the Line of Control. They have

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targeted two schools inside Azad Kashmir, killing over a dozen schoolchildren between the ages of 7 and 14. While resorting to the unprecedented air strikes against the Kashmiri freedom fighters, Indian aircraft intruded repeatedly into our airspace on 26 and 27 May despite our warnings. Two MiG aircraft were shot down by our ground forces 8-10 kilometres within our side of Kashmir. The Indian explanations of how their aircraft intruded into our airspace are patently false and disingenuous. Since 27 May and the shooting down of the two aircraft no further air incursions have been reported.

From the outset, our Prime Minister has taken several initiatives to defuse this crisis. On 24 May, he suggested to Prime Minister Vajpayee that the Directors-General of Military Operations of the two sides should hold talks. The Indian Director-General of Military Operations was however not forthcoming in the ensuing exchanges. On 26 May, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif wrote to the United Nations Secretary-General, urging him to send a special envoy and to strengthen UNMOGIP to verify India's complaints about Pakistan's alleged involvement. As the Indian Prime Minister himself revealed to the press, "we have rejected the suggestion of the United Nations Secretary-General to send a special envoy to India and Pakistan". On 28 May, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif telephoned his Indian counterpart and, besides urging him to halt the aerial operations, artillery fire and ground attacks, proposed to send Pakistan's Foreign Minister to New Delhi for talks to defuse the crisis. After three days, India says it has accepted "in principle" to receive our Foreign Minister. We do not witness any great sense of urgency in New Delhi to do so.

It should be underlined at this stage that, firstly, the situation along the Line of Control is serious and there is an obvious and inherent danger of escalation. The day before yesterday, Indian troops launched three ground assaults against Pakistani positions on the Line of Control. They were repulsed. I must emphasize that Pakistan has continued to act with self-restraint. No one in Pakistan has contemplated the nuclear dimension in this crisis. Yet, as our Prime Minister has said: "Two nuclear Powers should never be in a state of confrontation".

Secondly, our offer of talks to India is a gesture of our desire to avoid escalation and restore peace and dialogue. It would be a grave mistake, however, for anyone to misconstrue this gesture as a sign of weakness.

Thirdly, regardless of the outcome of India's air and ground operations against the Kashmiri freedom fighters, it is obvious that the Kashmir issue can be constructively addressed and eventually resolved only if India halts its brutal campaign of repression in Kashmir and ceases its artillery and ground attacks on Pakistan positions on the Line of Control.

If and when India agrees to talks, we shall offer suggestions to defuse the crisis and restore the dialogue process. We trust the international community will extend its support to realize these objectives.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Náray.

Mr. NÁRAY (Hungary): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, I wish first of all to congratulate you on your assumption of the post of the President of the Conference. I am also taking this opportunity to welcome the Ambassador of Brazil who has just joined us and I wish him every success in his endeavour.

The reason I wish to take the floor today is to make a very brief announcement, which I hope will contribute positively to the atmosphere of the Conference. The announcement is as follows: On 1 June this year, the National Assembly of the Republic of Hungary unanimously ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. This, we do believe, is an affirmative proof of my country's dedication and contribution to the cause of nuclear disarmament and also to regional and global peace and security. I wish to recall that Hungary is one of the 44 countries the ratification of which is necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We have come to the end of the list of speakers. Do any other delegations wish to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. AMORIM (Brazil) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me first of all to extend to you my warmest congratulations on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament and to express my appreciation for the intensive efforts you are making in order to get our work under way.

After coming to know you a few years ago when you were Minister for Foreign Affairs, it is a great pleasure to meet you in Geneva. In addition to being the Permanent Representative of a country which is a friend of Brazil, among other personal qualifications you are a connoisseur of the Brazilian literature and culture, which shows the scope and the humanistic character of your mind, qualities which in my view are indispensable for presiding effectively over the work of disarmament, above and beyond the specific technicalities of our tasks.

While assuring you of my full support and that of my delegation, I wish you every success in your tasks at this difficult time for our Conference. May I also express the appreciation my delegation feels for the work accomplished by your predecessors, Ambassador Binh of Viet Nam and Ambassador Rodríguez Cedeño of Venezuela? I also take this opportunity to convey the thanks of the Brazilian delegation to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail - good friends - and the other competent members of the secretariat.

(continued in English)

I asked for the floor first of all to thank you for the kind and warm words of welcome that you and other colleagues have addressed to me. I am

(Mr. Amorim, Brazil)

particularly pleased to return to Geneva and meet some of the friends that I made here and elsewhere. I regret that some of them may be departing as I come.

The CD was a gratifying experience to me, both personally and professionally. During my previous stay, for reasons of alphabetical determinism, the privilege of presiding over this Conference also fell upon me. That occurred immediately after the conclusion of that model instrument of disarmament, the Chemical Weapons Convention, which I had the honour to sign in Paris on behalf of the Brazilian Government. In a way, the CD was then facing if not the same at least a similar quandary as it is facing now, and at that point, I think, a combination of flexibility and attachment to principled positions enabled us to come to some relevant decisions concerning the work programme as well as specific items, such as the preparation of the CTBT. The lessons transmitted by many colleagues then and those that I have drawn from my participation in this Conference proved to be invaluable in my subsequent responsibilities, both in Brasilia and in New York. As before, it is my intention to continue to learn from and work closely with you and other colleagues on ways and means of advancing the important issues at hand in this body.

This being my first intervention in this body, I think it would be presumptuous on my part to make any profound statement on the subjects before us. On the other hand, it would be remiss of me if I do not at least touch upon one point, although very briefly.

General concerns have been expressed with regard to the fact that the CD has been unable to start substantive work. I do not need to elaborate on that because much has already been said on the possible implications of the current stalemate for the credibility of the CD. Inaction on measures which are long-awaited and which enjoyed consensus support already, such as the fissile material treaty, cannot but call into question, in the eyes of Governments and public opinion alike, the relevance of what we are doing here. However, from a different perspective, the work of the CD cannot be dissociated from the current standstill in nuclear disarmament as well as external developments affecting international security and strategic stability. Accordingly, the credibility of this forum would be related not only to action or inaction but also to the manner in which it can address the concerns and aspirations of humankind as a whole, which calls for a redoubling of efforts on measures for disarmament, especially those leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Simply putting those preoccupations forward, however, without a corresponding willingness to compromise and move away from maximalist or minimalist approaches on the two outstanding issues, does not seem to help us overcome the current logjam. Brazil continues to believe that compromise on the nuclear disarmament issue should be sought and similar approaches could be considered to address the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Amorim, Brazil)

Knowing so well your abilities and skill, I am confident that you will lead us to a balanced and comprehensive solution for our programme of work. This, I presume, will require a balanced approach, susceptible to reconciling enlightened pragmatism with the ideals that have inspired the creation of this forum - first and foremost, the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world in the not-so-distant future.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and the kind words he addressed to me. I now call on the representative of India, Ambassador Kunadi.

Ms. KUNADI (India): Mr. President, since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to express our deep satisfaction in seeing you guide our proceedings with your characteristic skill. We would also like to place on record our appreciation for the diligent efforts put in by the previous President, the Ambassador of Viet Nam, for carrying forward our work in the CD. I take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Celso Amorim of Brazil and wish him all success.

It was not my intention to seek the floor today, but I have been constrained to do so by the remarks made by the Ambassador of Pakistan about the situation in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Conference on Disarmament is not the forum for the discussion of such issues, but since Pakistan has sought to raise it today, we feel that the facts of the case must be set out clearly.

The facts are that India has been the subject of armed intrusion amounting to aggression on our territory. Since the beginning of last month, a large number of Pakistani-backed armed intruders, under the cover of intense artillery shelling, pushed into Indian territory across the Line of Control in the Kargil sector. Evidently, Pakistan hoped that these armed intruders would succeed in consolidating their positions so that they could pose a continuing threat to peace and security in Jammu and Kashmir. This is yet another instance of Pakistan's persistent efforts to infiltrate terrorists across the Line of Control, in pursuit of its designs on Jammu and Kashmir, an integral part of India.

The international community has been made aware of the causes for the current developments in the Kargil sector and the direct responsibility of Pakistan in the aggravation of tensions in the region. In spite of the grave provocations which are totally contrary to the letter and spirit of the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, India has shown repeatedly restraint in exercising its legitimate right of self-defence and its inalienable right to vacate aggression from its territory. The Indian defence forces have been conducting operations on our side of the Line of Control, and these operations will continue until the objective of putting an end to the armed intrusion in the entire Kargil sector and the restoration of the status quo ante is attained. Let there be no doubt about our determination to vacate this aggression.

(Ms. Kunadi, India)

Our desire for good-neighbourly relations with Pakistan was once again made amply clear in the historic initiative of the Prime Minister of India to visit Lahore in February this year. India has called upon Pakistan to join us in following up on the Lahore Declaration which commits the two countries to work purposefully in building confidence and trust and put in place a stable structure of cooperation and resolve all outstanding issues through peaceful bilateral discussions. The Indian Prime Minister has considered and accepted the offer made by Pakistan to send Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz to India. The dates for this visit will be worked out through diplomatic channels.

The present situation has been created entirely by Pakistan's provocative activities. It is for Pakistan to make amends. Neither direct aid and abetment of armed intrusions into Kargil nor raising the issue here in forums such as the CD will contribute to decreasing tensions nor improving relations with India.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of India for her statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Li Changhe.

Mr. LI (China) (translated from Chinese): First of all I would like to express our warm welcome to the new Ambassador of Brazil. Just now his statement made a deep impression on me. I am convinced that his outstanding abilities and rich experience will greatly benefit the work of the CD.

Secondly, concerning the statement made by the distinguished United States representative just now, I would like to make a brief response. His speech concerned the reasons for military action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, or rather his explanation for the military action against Yugoslavia. Here I would like to simply point out that rather more countries have views different from those held by the United States and some other States. We are told that the military action against Yugoslavia is for humanitarian reasons and to defend human rights. The gruesome fact is that the past 70-odd days of indiscriminate bombing on a small and weak country have wounded and killed thousands of civilians and seriously damaged the national economy and living conditions in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav people's basic human right to survival has been seriously harmed. Just after the bombing began there was a massive exodus of hundreds of thousands of refugees from the State. Not only has the indiscriminate bombing not resolved the humanitarian and human rights issues, it has caused the biggest humanitarian disaster since the Second World War. Ethnic conflict in Kosovo is actually an internal affair for Yugoslavia, and should be resolved by the Yugoslav people themselves.

According to the principles of the United Nations Charter, other countries do not have the right to use military force or the threat of military force to intervene. To use ethnic conflict within a country as a pretext for wielding military force, to embark on fresh interventionism claiming that human rights are more important than sovereignty, is actually to

(Mr. Li, China)

use human rights to trample upon other countries' sovereignty and interfere in their internal affairs of other countries, and build a new, hegemonic world order.

I would like to also emphasize here that deluding the United Nations into taking military action against Yugoslavia has destabilized the system of collective security established after the Second World War on the basis of the United Nations Charter.

These actions have had serious and far-reaching consequences for international security and disarmament. The task of the CD closely linked to international peace and security; therefore, in the words of the representative of the United States, "larger political issues" cannot be "left alone", for they inevitably have an influence over the work of the CD. In his speech the distinguished delegate of the United States admitted that the United States is indeed engaged in research and development on missile defence programmes - and what is the objective of such research and development? We are told that a decision - on whether to deploy or not - will not be taken until the year 2000 or thereafter: that is, the possibility of future deployment cannot be ruled out. The fact is, it is hard to imagine a State spending so much in material and financial resources just for the fun of it. I was glad to hear the distinguished United States delegate reaffirm that the ABM Treaty remains a cornerstone of international disarmament efforts. All countries, including China, attach importance to this statement of position by the United States delegate, but we will focus more attention on future actions. We hope that the United States can take genuine action to comply with the ABM Treaty, thus safeguarding strategic stability and the strategic balance throughout the world.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): It will not surprise anyone that I should ask for the floor to respond to the remarks which have been made by my distinguished colleague from India.

Thomas Hobbes once said that force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues. We must confess that India has exercised these virtues considerably with regard to its war in Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir is not Indian territory. It is disputed territory. You can look at any official map of the United Nations which emblazons Jammu and Kashmir as disputed territory. The United Nations Security Council has prescribed that the future of Jammu and Kashmir should be determined by its people through the exercise of a United Nations-supervised plebiscite, through democracy.

The oldest United Nations peacekeeping force is deployed in Kashmir, but unfortunately now only on the Line of Control on the Pakistani side, since India refuses to accept the United Nations peace observers on its side. Pakistan supports the Kashmiri freedom struggle. This struggle has been waged for 50 years, and most intensely for the last 10 years. It has been met with brutal suppression by the largest occupation force in the history of foreign occupation and colonialism - 700,000 troops in an area which is the size of Belgium, larger than the entire NATO and former Warsaw Pact armies combined.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

Pakistan supports morally, politically and diplomatically the legitimate freedom struggle of the Kashmiri people. We apologize to no one for doing so.

There has been no infiltration in Kashmir. The Kashmiris own their homeland. They have a right to be in their homeland. It is Indian forces which do not have a right to be in Jammu and Kashmir. Yet Pakistan has sought a political solution to Kashmir, not a military solution. It was India which refused to put this issue on the agenda of the bilateral talks. It did so finally last year, and we welcomed that. The present military situation was not created by Pakistan but by India's disproportionate response to a reversal in its brutal campaign against the Kashmiri Mujahideen. The Indian military has sought to involve Pakistan by cross-border shelling, by attacks and by aerial incursions.

If India truly believes that Pakistan is involved, it should accept our offer to reinforce the United Nations military observers along the Line of Control. It should respond positively to the request of General Bali, the head of UNMOGIP, to visit the Kargil and Drass sectors in Jammu and Kashmir. This will establish the truth. The truth is that India is engaged in a war with the Kashmiri people, and India cannot explain to its population why it is facing such difficulties in this war. Six hundred, according to India, perhaps even less, Kashmiri Mujahideen pitted against the entire Indian air force - 30,000 Indian troops. This is a brutal war, and we ask the international community to at least apply the same standards to Kashmir as we have heard this morning upheld for Kosovo. Are the people of Kashmir the children of a lesser God? We do not think so.

We have raised the issue here because we believe it impinges directly on international peace and security and on the work of this Conference. We trust and hope that our friends in this Conference will respond by counselling India to exercise restraint, to halt its brutal military campaign in Kashmir and to allow a political process as envisaged by the United Nations resolutions to resolve this issue.

Pakistan has offered to send its Foreign Minister - not to make amends. There are no amends that we need to make. If there are any amends to be made, they are to be made by India for its cruelty and brutalism against the Kashmiri people. It is the amends that are to be made by India for its aerial incursion into Pakistan, which resulted in two of its planes having been shot down. The amends have to be made by India for killing 14 of our schoolchildren in the last two days. The amends have to be made by India for attacking our posts. Even as I speak today, the attacks are going on our posts along the Line of Control. India talks peace in international forums, makes war in Kashmir and threatens its smaller neighbours, one and all. Nevertheless, we have taken the initiative for peace with the Secretary-General, with India itself. Our desire for dialogue is evident and open. There is urgency in the need to establish contact at the highest level and to avoid an escalation of the war that is taking place along the Line of Control. If India believes there is a danger of escalation, then it should respond urgently. If it believes that we are showing signs of

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

weakness, I must say again it is mistaken. It is a sign of our constructive approach, our restraint and responsibility as a nuclear Power. Let India not make a mistake of historic proportions.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): I would just like to respond very briefly to the remarks by my Chinese colleague. It is very clear that China and the United States have different views about humanitarian and human rights issues. This is unfortunate, but it is true, and recent history and upcoming anniversaries only reinforce this sad point. I just want to make clear that, despite these differences, we need to work together here on CD issues, and my delegation is prepared to do so in a spirit of compromise and understanding.

Mr. LI (China) (translated from Chinese): Excuse me for applying to take the floor again. I cannot but make a statement because my distinguished American colleague has just alluded to a number of matters that have nothing to do with this Conference. My delegation cannot but ask for this right of reply. If accusations are going to be made over internal Chinese matters on which history has long since rendered its verdict, my delegation considers this wholly unacceptable.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): Mr. President, I am not responding to anyone but just to a situation. But before that, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your presidency. We know that you will carry forward the good work that was done by your predecessor, the Ambassador of Viet Nam. We are pleased not just because Algeria and Bangladesh have such close ties as they indeed do but we are aware of your prodigious capabilities and we are glad that these will be pressed into our service, and under your leadership, we hope to find the programme of work that we seek.

I speak specifically to the developments in South Asia. As we have heard, the situation along the Line of Control in the Kashmir area is not calm. Indeed, it is serious. As a country friendly to both India and Pakistan, Bangladesh would urge restraint, both strategic and tactical. We do so in the confidence that the values and elements that unite the South Asian peoples are indeed deeper than those that divide. Of course, there are differences that set them apart. This is obvious to see. But most of these flow from legacies that hearken back to a time when their countries were not independent. The fact that even to date these have not been resolved point to the persistent negative consequences of some elements of colonialism and their continued volatility. But the ample time that has elapsed and the evidence of what can happen if these are not resolutely addressed indicate that this must be done.

South Asian countries are democracies and we are proud of it. We need to work more to provide the economic emancipation our peoples richly deserve. That is Bangladesh's focus as it is also India's and Pakistan's. Our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina travelled to both India and Pakistan last year. This she did to stress in these commonalities. Also, the capabilities that India and Pakistan have recently acquired in the military field enjoin upon them greater responsibilities. The region - and the world - expect these responsibilities to be discharged. We derive satisfaction from - indeed are

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

heartened by - the assertions of their leaderships that this will be done, and the present situation will indeed be contained. We look to Mr. Sartaj Aziz's planned visit to New Delhi and express the hope that, just as both sides have stated, this will initiate a positive process of constructive dialogue. Deliberations, honestly conducted and with good intentions, have in the past untied tighter Gordian knots.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his statement and the warm words addressed to the Chair. His statement brings us to the end of the list of speakers for this plenary meeting.

As I informed you during the last plenary meeting, I have indeed commenced a process of intensive consultations with a view to promoting agreement on the Conference's programme of work. At the time I said that agreement on this subject implied acceptable solutions on appropriate mechanisms relating to nuclear disarmament and the arms race in outer space. I have devoted all my efforts in recent days to the search for a compromise on these two pending issues, on the basis of all existing proposals. Those consultations have once again brought to light a desire shared by all to resolve these pending problems and to begin the Conference's substantive work without further delay. My consultations have also shown that the process in which we are engaged required concessions by all, as I need hardly remind you. Without wishing to minimize the difficulties we are facing, and they do exist, I think I can say that we appear to be on the right track and that our collective efforts will ultimately result in compromises, hopefully as soon as possible, which take into account the concerns and the priorities on all sides, and which are therefore capable of being accepted by all.

Since we have come to the end of our agenda, I wish to inform you, lastly, that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 10 June 1999, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.826/Corr.1
22 June 1999

ENGLISH ONLY

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 3 June 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed-Salah Dembri (Algeria)

Corrigendum

The document symbol on pages 2-17 should read CD/PV.826.

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GE.99-62671 (E)

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.827
10 June 1999

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 10 June 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed-Salah Dembri Algeria

GE.99-62286 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 827th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, on behalf of all of us, I should like to extend a warm welcome to the new representative of Nigeria in the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Pius Ikpefuan Ayewoh. I am particularly happy to welcome him in view of the fact that he represented his country in Algiers for four years, in the course of which he made a major contribution to strengthening the relations between our two countries and promoting an Africa of unity, prosperity and solidarity.

On the list of speakers for today I have the representative of the Russian Federation, following which we will consider a request from Jamaica, which wishes to participate as an observer in the work of the Conference during the 1999 session.

I invite the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Sidorov, to take the floor.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, I would like to begin by thanking you for giving me the floor and to take the opportunity to congratulate you on taking up this post, to wish you every success and to assure you of my delegation's readiness for constructive cooperation. I should also like to welcome our new colleagues in the Conference who have recently joined us.

The NATO aggression against sovereign Yugoslavia has gravely complicated the international climate. The world has been faced with a new attempt to make force prevail. Russia firmly rejects this approach, which runs counter to the trend towards the evolution of a multipolar world order, as well as to the legitimate interests of the majority of States. The military operation by NATO in the Balkans has flouted the foundations of international law and the United Nations Charter. The list of the many victims of aggression grows day by day. Especially outrageous is the fact that the alliance is using inhumane types of weapon which have indiscriminate effects, such as cluster bombs and munitions containing depleted uranium, whose principal victims are the civilian population. One of the most densely populated corners of the continent has suffered enormous ecological damage which threatens to extend to neighbouring regions.

We consider that the completion of the process of finalizing the United Nations Security Council draft resolution on Kosovo which was worked out by the G-8 Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Bonn is a sound basis for the immediate cessation of attacks on Yugoslavia with missiles and bombs.

The celebrations on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of NATO graphically demonstrated that the genuine transformation of the alliance from a military into a primarily political organization, about which so much has been said recently, has never taken place. The North Atlantic Alliance intends to address the problems associated with the risks and challenges of the new generation using methods from the time of the "cold war", with

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

reliance on military force. The concluding documents of NATO's anniversary summit lay claim to the domination of this organization not only in European but also in world politics. What is particularly alarming is that the Alliance has officially dropped its former defensive strategy and openly proclaims its right to conduct any operations, including military operations, beyond its geographical area of responsibility.

In Russia there is serious concern about the North Atlantic Organization's declaration on "transparency without geographical limits". This means a further eastward advance by the Alliance to the very borders of the Russian Federation. In this connection, I would like to remind you that our position of principle as regards NATO's expansion is well known and has not been changed.

The bill on the establishment of a national anti-missile defence system recently adopted by the House of Representatives of the United States Congress can only be considered as a further step aimed at undermining the 1972 ABM Treaty. The Russian delegation has already noted in its statement on 11 May that such actions could lead to the breakdown of the existing structure of treaties and agreements in the field of strategic offensive and defensive weapons and pose a threat to the whole disarmament process. Hence the work of the Conference on Disarmament in 1999 is proceeding against the background of a worsening international situation, demonstrating that our forum is highly sensitive to political developments in the world. All the circumstances enumerated above were of course bound to have an impact on the effectiveness of the CD's activities and have objectively contributed to delaying a start to our substantive work. Nevertheless I should like to highlight the priority elements of the Conference's work as the Russian delegation sees them.

The issues of "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament" have always been the focus of Russia's foreign policy. Russia has been taking consistent steps to reduce nuclear arsenals and place qualitative limitations on them, both unilaterally and on a bilateral footing with the United States of America. The nuclear arms race of the times of the "cold war" can now definitely be said to be over. It is difficult to deny that much has already been done by the two largest nuclear Powers in this respect in recent years. However, nuclear disarmament is a time-consuming and costly process which requires solutions to a whole range of financial, technical and environmental problems. This process is evolving today in accordance with concluded treaties and unilateral measures. In a number of important aspects this is being done ahead of schedule. We are in favour of other nuclear Powers joining our efforts to reduce nuclear armaments.

We would like to emphasize that deep cuts in strategic offensive weapons are possible only if strategic stability in the world is maintained. In this connection I wish to remind you that the initiative put forward by Russian President B.N. Yeltsin at the forty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly on 26 September 1994 for the development of a treaty on nuclear security and strategic stability is still on the negotiating table. We continue to urge that all nuclear weapons should be relocated back onto the territories of the nuclear Powers.

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federatio

The process for the reduction of strategic offensive weapons is linked in the most direct way possible with strict compliance with the provisions o the 1972 ABM Treaty. There is an intrinsic interrelationship between strategic offensive weapons and strategic defensive weapons, one laid down i the ABM Treaty itself in the form of a clear understanding that, given parit in terms of strategic offensive weapons, the emergence of strategic means of defence in the hands of one of the parties would be equivalent to an increas in the power of a pre-emptive nuclear strike. It follows from this interrelationship that deep cuts in strategic offensive weapons are feasible only if restrictions are placed on the ABM system.

The ABM Treaty is a key component of the whole structure of nuclear disarmament agreements, a basis for supporting strategic stability and ensuring international security. That is why it affects the interests of th majority of the world's States. It is no accident that many CD delegations lend political support to the ABM Treaty and express concern about its futur At present a real threat is emerging that the existing agreements will be wrecked. This stems from the well-known plans of the United States to deplo a national anti-missile defence system, which is prohibited under the ABM Treaty and could lead to its de facto abrogation. Such actions would have extremely adverse consequences. At the very least they would make further reductions of strategic offensive weapons much more difficult, would trigger new round of the strategic offensive and defensive weapons arms race and wou have a negative impact on the regime of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Instead of the expected curbing of the process of proliferation, the world community could be faced with effort to encourage it.

We consider that it is pointless at this stage to plunge into theoretical discussions concerning future practical steps to eliminate nucl weapons, still less to set artificial deadlines to that effect. We are convinced that an effective and logical step to be undertaken in the field multilateral nuclear disarmament following the nuclear test ban should be a convention prohibiting the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. The unanimous support enjoyed by the FMCT resolution in the United Nations General Assembly once again confirmed the importance the international community attaches to this issue.

Russia is in favour of the earliest possible re-establishment of the ad hoc committee on the FMCT. Last year the CD made good progress towards resumption of work on this question. We think it would be wrong in this respect to waste time searching for alternative issues in the field of nucl disarmament topics, thus ignoring the repeatedly reconfirmed consensus on a FMCT.

We understand the concern of many CD participants who display heighte interest in nuclear disarmament issues. At the same time, we too are entit to count on our partners' understanding of our position in this field. I should like to stress that both last year and this year Russia has repeated demonstrated its flexibility and readiness for compromises on this range of

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

issues. However, solutions in keeping with the interests of all delegations can be arrived at only through give and take and only by mutual, not unilateral, concessions.

Useful work was accomplished last year on "negative" security assurances, which enabled the participants to "synchronize their watches" on a very important issue related to the strengthening of international peace and security. The exchange of views showed that the positions of delegations do not always coincide. This is understandable, because we live in a dynamically evolving world. However, it proved possible to identify new interesting developments in this area and reach an understanding on the necessity for further active efforts in identifying a common approach to the form and substance of NSAs. I am convinced that difficult but interesting work lies ahead. In this connection we support the speedy re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on NSAs with the previous mandate.

For our part we would like to confirm our readiness in principle to expand the range of countries which benefit from the existing system of security assurances, through intensification of the process of creating nuclear-weapon-free zones, while consolidating the obligation of the non-nuclear countries not to acquire nuclear weapons and not to place or deploy them on their territory. At present 107 States have already signed treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones or have become participants in such zones. Thus, negative security assurances have been extended to an area covering more than 50 per cent of the world's surface. We seek to continue this process.

The exploration of outer space, which started in Russia, opens up broad prospects for world civilization. Outer space belongs to all of mankind, and consequently any activities carried out in it and any possible benefits should be used in the interests of all countries and all of mankind. The problems involved in preventing an arms race in outer space have been for many years and continue to be among the highest priorities for Russian diplomacy. It is worth remembering a number of Russian initiatives in this field. The most significant include proposals for the conclusion of treaties prohibiting the deployment of any kind of weapon in outer space and banning the use of force in outer space and from outer space against the Earth. Despite rather extensive support throughout the world, these initiatives have never been put into practice for a number of reasons.

The 1967 Outer Space Treaty does not lay down a general prohibition on the use of outer space for military purposes. The international community has not yet drawn up rules prohibiting the deployment, use and testing in space of weapons other than weapons of mass destruction. The progressive development of space technology and the latest high-technology weapons systems can provide a positive incentive for some States to use this legal loophole for purposes inconsistent with peaceful activities in the zone around the Earth.

In our view, the speedy development of an international legal regime prohibiting the deployment of offensive weapons in outer space should become one of the principal tasks of the world community. We fully share the view of

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those who deem it better to consider the prevention of an arms race in outer space today rather than wasting vast resources on the disarmament of outer space tomorrow. To our mind, by no means all has yet been done to prevent the zone around the Earth from becoming an arena of military confrontation.

Outer space issues are also becoming more topical in the light of the fundamental importance of preserving the 1972 ABM Treaty in its present state. This instrument, I wish to remind you, prohibits the development, testing or deployment in outer space of components of an anti-ballistic missile defence. The Treaty regime frees outer space from an entire class of weapons, namely ABM weapons. If we succeed in preserving the ABM Treaty, there will be a real chance of preventing a new cycle in the arms race both on Earth and in outer space.

Under General Assembly resolution 53/76, our Conference on Disarmament is assigned a primary role in further work on military issues in outer space. The resolution received 165 votes in favour and not a single one against. We regret that the important work conducted on this issue in the CD at the beginning of the 1990s was interrupted halfway. We are of the opinion that many useful advances and suggestions from our partners were unjustly forgotten later. In this connection Russia lends its support to the proposal made by the Chinese delegation for the resumption of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in 1999.

We should like to confirm once again that Russia has always supported and continues to support a step-by-step process aimed at achieving a genuine global ban on anti-personnel mines. We have repeatedly and at the highest level declared our support for the noble goals of the Ottawa Convention. At the same time we are convinced that the problem of mines should be addressed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account the actual defensive and economic capabilities and geopolitical situation of each State.

We welcome the entry into force of amended Protocol II to the 1980 "Inhumane Weapons" Convention last December. At present intensive work is under way in Russia to prepare for its ratification. This notwithstanding, we have already put into practice a number of its provisions, especially those concerning mine clearance activities.

We take a positive view of the outcome of the preparatory meeting for the first annual conference of the States parties to the Protocol, which was held recently in Geneva. We believe that a sound basis has been laid for the success of this important event in December.

Today we see no alternative forum to the Conference on Disarmament which could involve key producers and consumers of anti-personnel mines in negotiations and achieve constructive cooperation between States parties and non-parties to the Ottawa Convention. In this regard, we express our readiness to discuss, under item 6 of the agenda, "Comprehensive programme of disarmament", the question of the phased prohibition of APLs. As a first step in this direction the Conference could embark on the drafting of a universal agreement banning the transfer of APLs. We regret that we did not succeed in

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establishing an ad hoc committee on APLs last year, although we came very close. However, should circumstances prevent us from taking such a decision this time as well, we should immediately reactivate the work of the Special Coordinator on the basis of the previous mandate.

Russia attaches great significance to the issue of transparency in conventional armaments, and recognizes its positive role in creating a climate of confidence between different countries. In saying this, we are aware that it is just one of various confidence-building measures. What is most important, of course, is to reduce political and, indeed, military tension in a number of regions of the world. We recognize that much has already been done in this direction, either in the framework of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms or in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. In our view, the Conference, in considering this issue, should define its own role and possible contribution in order to avoid duplication of efforts being undertaken in other international forums.

We are of the opinion that transparency in the supply of arms can be a key factor in preventing the destabilizing accumulation of such weapons and armed conflicts. At the same time this transparency should not jeopardize the national security of States. We are convinced that work on transparency in armaments should be viewed not as an end in itself in addressing arms control issues but as just one of the means of establishing a climate of trust between States. We consider that in order to curb the destabilizing accumulation of conventional arms, it would be useful if "transparency" came first of all from importers, because information on arms purchases is more sensitive for them - from the point of view of national security - than for exporters.

The Russian delegation fully supports the efforts being made by the distinguished Ambassador of Switzerland, E. Hofer, to find a fair solution to the problem of expansion of the membership of the CD. We are of the opinion that we should make a further attempt this year to help the five States - Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Tunisia and Ecuador - to acquire the status of full members of the Conference. We also have no objection to appointing special coordinators on the issues of the improved and effective functioning of the CD and the review of its agenda, as we did last year.

The Russian delegation, as in the past, is committed to constructive cooperation and the search for mutually acceptable solutions to urgent international disarmament issues. We hope that a spirit favouring practical work will prevail during this CD session.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. In particular, I would like to express publicly my deep appreciation for the support he has provided to the Chair in its difficult search for a compromise on the Conference's programme of work.

We have reached the end of the list of speakers. Would any other delegation like to take the floor at this stage?

(The President)

As I announced at the start of the meeting, I propose, if you agree, that the Conference should take a decision on a request made by Jamaica to participate as an observer in our 1999 session, without considering it first in an informal plenary session. This request is reproduced in document CD/WP.502, which has been distributed. May I take it that this request is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): As I have had occasion to inform you, the Chair has begun a series of consultations which have enabled it, in an initial stage, to opt for a comprehensive approach as the only means of steering us towards the desired consensus on a balanced programme of work. These consultations have also clearly brought out the need to focus all our efforts on the progressive development of compromises on the two pending issues, to wit, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In this context, the Chair has sought to translate in practical terms the elements capable of serving as the basis for a consensus. I am sure that everyone will acknowledge the difficulties involved in this task, and it was precisely that recognition, which I detected among all delegations, that serves to confirm my hopes and fuel my efforts each day. While recognizing the obstacles we have yet to overcome, the emergence of certain encouraging signs prompts us to persevere in the course which we have set for ourselves. The support of all delegations in this crucial phase is essential in order to frame an agreement which will enable the Conference to commence its substantive work without further delay.

Lastly, as we have come to the end of our agenda, I would like to announce that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 17 June 1999, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.828
17 June 1999

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 17 June 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed-Salah Dembri (Algeria)

GE.99-62678 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 828th plenary session of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should first like to extend a warm welcome on behalf of all of us to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. We are honoured by his presence here today as we prepare to close the second phase of our annual session and apply ourselves to the task of establishing our programme of work.

As you know, the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Mounir Zahran, is about to leave Geneva. Ambassador Zahran is the doyen of the Conference on Disarmament, having come to Geneva and taken up his duties in August 1991. Not long afterwards - in 1992 - our Conference appointed him to the office of Special Coordinator with responsibility for seeking a consensus on an organizational framework for agenda item 8, "Comprehensive programme of disarmament". At the beginning of our 1993 session, he chaired the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments and from August to December of the same year he served as President of the Conference. In 1996 he was appointed Chairman of Working Group 2 - Legal and Institutional Issues - of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. In 1997, Ambassador Zahran served as Special Coordinator dealing with the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. His performance in all of these varied and exacting offices was outstanding and our Conference is indebted to him for his service. We are all familiar with the effectiveness, clarity of vision and commitment he displayed in defence of his country's positions and of those of the Group of 21 in this forum. We need no reminding of Ambassador Zahran's commitment to the resolution of weighty and sensitive issues which he addressed with his customary good humour. I should like, on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, to wish Ambassador Zahran and his family every happiness. I shall now give him the floor, following which I shall give the floor to the representatives of France and Ukraine.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I am confident that your recognized ability and experience will assist the Conference in embarking on its substantive work after a long wait. I should also like to thank the others who have served as President of the Conference during this session: Ambassador Robert Grey of the United States, Ambassador Cedeño of Venezuela and Ambassador Nguyen Quy Binh of Viet Nam.

As I address the Conference today, my eight-year term as Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva is drawing to a close. I can admit today that the assignment has not been an easy one. Indeed, I could probably say without exaggeration that my work in Geneva has occupied most of my time and thoughts, permeating my whole existence and becoming the miniature cosmos in which I have been living for the past eight years. If I were to consider the sum total of my assignments in Geneva as the solar system, the Conference on Disarmament would represent for me the planet Earth, the world we love, which, from our vantage point, occupies a unique and prominent position, with vibrant life on its surface, hopes hovering in the air and disappointments clouding its skies and horizons from time to time.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

I vividly recall having viewed the conference room from every angle, with its former seating arrangement and with the present horseshoe arrangement after the addition of seats in the middle of the room to accommodate the expanded membership of the Conference. Thanks to the rule of alphabetical rotation, I have moved around the entire room during the past eight years. I have occupied all the seats reserved for heads of delegations and for the President of the Conference. I have become acquainted with the characters depicted by the artist José María Sert who keep watch over the room and I have viewed them from every angle, in various settings of light and shade, and under the influence of the changes of mood and morale that the Conference has experienced over the past eight years. The paintings have come to represent an integral part of the work of the Conference, echoing its deliberations, blending into its technical work and rounding it out. I have often wondered about the message that is being conveyed to us by those hundreds of figures frozen in a posture of eternal suffering. I have repeatedly asked myself a question that continues to occupy my mind as I leave the Conference today: Is the Conference on Disarmament really doing everything in its power to save the peoples of the world from the scourge of war, as stated in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations?

At times, I reassured myself that the Conference was indeed fulfilling the role entrusted to it, within the limits imposed by the realities of international relations. It seemed as though the people looking down on us from the walls and ceilings of this room were casting a blessing on our work and sympathizing with our efforts. But I cannot conceal the fact that my answer to the question was usually accompanied by mixed feelings, a sense that the figures were ignoring our statements, dismissing them as a waste of time. It was as though we were crying in the wilderness - an image inspired by Abraham's journey. Indeed, their mocking looks sometimes turned into reproachful stares. But on other occasions they seemed to radiate optimism, for example when some advance - however marginal - was achieved, offering a glimmer of hope that better things were on their way, particularly in negotiations about our top priority - nuclear disarmament. But even as I leave Geneva, it is still a dream that has failed to come true.

I shall most certainly miss this room with its unique Spanish art and its somewhat sombre decor, bereft of cheery colours and bright lights. But above all I shall miss the colleagues with whom I have worked with such deep commitment over a long period of time. Some of them are still here; others have left before me. Many have made their mark on this forum and helped in one way or another to form its collective spirit. Part of this spirit remains with each one of us wherever we go. For the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, extends far beyond the confines of this room. It is a product of the hopes of mankind, a torch received from our predecessors, faithfully and proudly carried forward and passed on to our successors.

My thoughts turn at this point to a number of individuals who had a far-reaching influence on the spirit of the proceedings and on myself. I cannot possibly name them all, but let me mention at least Ambassador Antonio de Icaza of Mexico, with his distinctive voice and irresistible logic, and Ambassador Munir Akram of Pakistan, with his

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

well-ordered arguments and a name that has linked us in many people's minds, leading to instances of mistaken identity; Ambassador Mark Moher of Canada, whom I mention as evidence of the lack of bias among us towards the countries of the South and as a living refutation of the argument that diplomats are incapable of combining pragmatic and principled approaches; Ambassador Robert Grey, whose direct approach leaves no room for misunderstanding of his positions; Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois, defender of the musical French language and Cartesian logic; her successor Ambassador de La Fortelle, Ambassador Arundhati Ghose and Ambassador Savitri Kunadi of India and many others who left an indelible mark on the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is an undeniable fact that the Conference on Disarmament has over the years developed its own distinctive characteristics and traditions. But it also faithfully mirrors the state of international relations in general, although its geographical groups do not reflect the post-cold-war situation in which the positions of the Eastern and Western groups are virtually identical. There now seem to be basically two groups: North and South.

After spending eight years in this conference room and its corridors, it is time to pause for a moment to assess the wide-ranging experience I have accumulated from day to day. I feel it is an assessment that ought to be shared with this distinguished assembly.

First, the achievements - and there certainly have been achievements in recent years which should not be underestimated, despite the reservations we expressed at the time. I shall mention a few of them, starting with the prohibition of chemical weapons. The Chemical Weapons Convention is one more step towards ridding the world of all weapons of mass destruction. The verification mechanisms for the Convention set an important precedent in terms of mechanisms for the other treaties dealing with weapons of mass destruction, particularly the verification protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention.

Secondly, the comprehensive test ban: the title Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was actually a misnomer. I have repeatedly pointed out that it is merely a second partial test-ban treaty, since it does not cover all nuclear tests. Nevertheless, the treaty has established a legal framework for the resolve of the international community to halt all explosive nuclear testing and an appropriate basis for its appeal to all countries to commit themselves not just to a narrow literal interpretation of the provisions of the Treaty but to its substance and spirit.

Thirdly, the Conference has succeeded in establishing a negotiating mandate - the foundation stone for a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear explosions - by taking the important step at its 1998 session of establishing an Ad Hoc Committee under agenda item 1 to negotiate such a treaty. A point to be stressed is that the establishment of the Committee under agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", confirms that the aims of the desired treaty are not limited to non-proliferation but cover nuclear disarmament too. I shall not go into the details of my Government's position in this regard, which has repeatedly been reflected in the Conference records, but shall simply make

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two personal remarks. First, it is important to ensure that the scope of the treaty is as wide as possible and that an effective verification mechanism is established as the backbone of the treaty, which would otherwise be of no practical importance. Secondly, if we are determined to produce a treaty banning fissile material, we must set our minds to the task as soon as possible, clearing away all the procedural obstacles, since the value of the treaty will depend on its early entry into force.

While the achievements of the Conference are undeniable, I would be lacking in the frankness that this occasion demands if I failed to mention the many areas in which no progress whatsoever has been made. This failure is compounded by the fact that the areas concerned represent key demands of almost all the peoples of the world.

The first area is that of nuclear disarmament. The Conference will remain totally incapable of taking any effective negotiating steps so long as it fails to achieve the aim of nuclear disarmament set forth in article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, ratified 30 years ago, despite the decision on "Principles and objectives" adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Some people are talking about the need to adopt a practical and pragmatic approach, which means deciding at the outset that it is impossible for the Conference to make any headway in this regard. They view our talk about nuclear disarmament being a vital prerequisite for the survival of the human race as a mere flight of fancy. I can find no better response than to cite one of the foremost scientists in human history, Albert Einstein, who asked "If not now, when? If not us, who?"

We are not opposed to any unilateral or bilateral measures by the nuclear-weapon States aimed at reducing their nuclear arsenals, but we continue to stress the need for the Conference on Disarmament to conduct negotiations on nuclear disarmament as the only multilateral forum possessing the authority to do so.

The positions adopted on the subject by other important international forums should be called to mind at this point. First, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of July 1996. Secondly, the programme of work on nuclear disarmament that I submitted to the Conference on behalf of 28 member countries of the Group of 21 on 8 August 1996, providing for the eradication of nuclear weapons in three stages culminating in the year 2020. Then there was the 1996 decision of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities urging the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and stating that there was no place for nuclear weapons in international relations. The report of the Canberra Commission was also issued in 1996. Lastly, there were the initiative sponsored by Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1974 to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak's important initiative in 1991 to rid the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. This was reflected in numerous resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and many other international and regional forums, including the summit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in Durban in 1998.

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I wish to take this opportunity to repeat what I said in May this year at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference to be held in the year 2000 by calling on all countries in the Middle East that have not already done so to accede to or to ratify the BWC, CWC and NPT simultaneously so that the zone can be established as soon as possible, guaranteeing security and stability for all the peoples of the region. I should also like to mention President Mubarak's 1998 initiative aimed at ridding the whole world of all weapons of mass destruction and his call for an international conference to achieve that goal.

Another significant development has been the emergence as an effective international movement of the group that issued the declaration entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". Its membership has been growing day by day and civil society has begun to identify with it as a solid basis for the hope that nuclear disarmament efforts may prove successful in the future if they take the form of firm, practical and effective steps, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 53/77 Y.

With regard to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, I cannot find any justification for the failure of the Conference to address the issue. The aim is to halt an arms race that is both destructive and a waste of human resources before it takes off. If we cannot even manage to negotiate seriously about the issue now, does it mean that we intend to stand idly by as this dangerous technology, controlled by a mere handful of States, is developed, knowing that its historical implications for the human race could be increased suffering and a growing threat to the security and stability of peoples? It is argued in some quarters that outer space is not currently used for the deployment or stockpiling of weapons, but does that mean we should wait until it happens? Surely prevention is better than cure. Are we to wait until a disaster occurs before facing up to its consequences? I well remember the deliberations at the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament in 1978, when the delegation of the Soviet Union, noting that outer space was not yet being used for military operations, demanded that such operations should be prohibited in the future. I therefore sincerely urge the Conference to start negotiations as speedily as possible on a treaty to prohibit the use of outer space for military purposes of any kind, so that humankind is spared the dangers of this gap in the legislation governing international relations and so that outer space is used solely for peaceful purposes.

At this point, I should like to reiterate the proposal I have made repeatedly on behalf of the Egyptian delegation that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) should carry out a study of new categories of weapons of mass destruction that may be developed in the near future. The purpose of the proposal was to check these undesirable developments by negotiating a ban on the production of such weapons before they even start to be produced. I wish to add that the proposal is not intended to serve narrow Egyptian interests but is based on a general humanitarian approach designed to benefit the whole human race. I hope that such studies are undertaken before the international community is presented with a fait accompli that is difficult to address or change.

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If I wished to say what conclusion I have reached after this prolonged experience, I could summarize it in one sentence: the Conference must keep abreast of the significant developments that are constantly occurring in the world today and cast off the image of an antiquated club in which the air is stale and the ideas time-worn.

The first and most important characteristic of the present era is democracy, which is basically at odds with the practices of this Conference, since a small group of States - or even a single State - can prevent the Conference from addressing issues that are of vital importance to the overwhelming majority of its members on the pretext of consensus, which is interpreted by some as allowing any member who so wishes to exercise a veto over both substantive and procedural issues such as the establishment of committees and the appointment of coordinators, thereby perverting the proceedings of the Conference.

The second characteristic of the era is transparency, which implies that the real positions of States should be presented openly and clearly to the entire international community and that delegations should not conceal their true positions behind outmoded mechanisms and traditions. I therefore see the need to open up the Conference to more substantive discussions, which should be held at plenary or informal open-ended meetings instead of behind closed doors or in the form of restricted informal consultations. Transparency is an effective confidence-building measure that can promote understanding and break the deadlock that is becoming a chronic feature of the Conference.

Transparency in the area of disarmament applies to all categories of weapons and military technology, including weapons of mass destruction, and not just to conventional weapons. Only then can transparency provide a clear overview of the unwarranted accumulation of every kind of weapons in all States, posing a threat to international peace and security, and serve as an early warning system.

The third characteristic - and perhaps one of the key principles of modern civilization - is equality and non-discrimination. By equality we mean equality in rights and duties. If we agree to condemn the use of weapons of mass destruction, we should also condemn their possession, prohibit their production and destroy all stockpiles because the continued possession of any such weapon implies that it can still be used. Moreover, its use or the threat of its use is equivalent to the crime of genocide, which was one of the subjects discussed in connection with the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court that the international community agreed to establish in 1998. It follows that when we call for the eradication of weapons of mass destruction, our appeal should be addressed to everybody, and when we agree to ban nuclear tests, we should reject all nuclear tests without exception, whether conducted by means of explosions or by other technological means. And when we talk about security and stability, we mean security for all without discrimination and without exception. Selectivity and double standards are among the most serious challenges facing the international community today, and the Conference on Disarmament must shun them.

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The fourth characteristic is, as we all know and have repeated in other forums, the participation of civil society. Here again we find that the Conference on Disarmament is one of the last remaining bastions in which a large number of developed countries are still stubbornly opposed to any role for civil society. The fact is that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are repositories of creative ideas and possess abundant resources that would certainly help to revitalize the work of the Conference and rescue it from the state of hibernation into which it has lapsed. For example, the Conference has no Internet site in which it could regularly publish delegations' statements and the Conference records. That would be a simple step but an effective way of disseminating information and involving civil society, including relevant NGOs that cannot afford a permanent presence in Geneva. I therefore repeat what I have proposed on many occasions: that NGOs should be given a voice in the plenary meetings. It is a step that I imagine is inevitable in the near future.

In taking up these points, I have sought to highlight a number of principles which I view as major human achievements that deserve to be promoted in all forums.

I take leave of this Conference as we approach the threshold of a new millennium that I hope will usher in favourable developments in international relations in general and an end to the chronic inertia of the Conference on Disarmament in particular. To that end, I have tried to offer some comments that may help my friends and colleagues in the Conference to fulfil their collective aspiration to see the Conference discharging its mandate to the full, as the sole international negotiating forum on disarmament issues.

I welcome the return to Geneva of Ambassador Celso Amorim, the Permanent Representative of Brazil, who is to occupy his country's seat after a six-year absence during which he served as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Permanent Representative of Brazil in New York. I also welcome Ambassador Pius Ayewoh of Nigeria and extend warm thanks and appreciation to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, and to his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and the members of the Conference secretariat for all the support they have given me and the Egyptian delegation when I was President of the Conference on Disarmament in 1994, when I was appointed Special Coordinator for transparency in armaments and the comprehensive programme of disarmament in 1992 and for the improved and effective functioning of the Conference in 1997, when I chaired the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments in 1993 and when I chaired the Working Group on Legal and Institutional Matters during the negotiations on the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty in 1997.

I wish to say to all my friends that although I am leaving you, our friendship will continue and I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you all to Cairo whenever you visit the city. So I will not say farewell but au revoir.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): It is always a very moving time for us when a colleague leaves us, and particularly when that colleague has occupied a major place within this think-tank on issues which affect the

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future of all mankind, its harmonious future, and I consider above all as a good omen the fact that on the serious issues of disarmament our colleague Mounir Zahran should have drawn above all on universal popular wisdom by peppering his statement with quotations which all testify to his militant spirit in favour of the harmonious and salutary convergence of cultures and civilizations. We thank him for that, and I thank him personally for the friendly words he addressed to me, and on behalf of you all, for all those who were also mentioned in his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of France, Ambassador de La Fortelle.

Mr. de La FORTELLE (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, speaking for the first time in this second part of the 1999 session of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to convey my sincere congratulations to you and assure you of the full support of my delegation in the delicate mission entrusted to you. I am sure that your distinguished qualities, personal as well as professional, will enable you to do all that can be done to pull the Conference on Disarmament out of its present difficulties.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues who have just joined the Conference on Disarmament, the Ambassadors of Iraq, Slovakia and more recently Brazil and Nigeria. I am also very pleased to be delivering this statement before Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, who has played and continues to play a distinguished role in matters of concern to us. Finally, as Ambassador Mounir Zahran has officially taken leave of us, I would like to say how sad I feel to witness the departure of a great diplomat, although and especially since the positions he upholds with great skill sometimes differ from ours. In my turn I extend to him every wish for happiness and success in the future.

The acknowledgement of stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament is doubly disturbing. First of all it is disturbing in the short term. It condemns the Conference on Disarmament to inaction, and does not enable it to meet the expectations of the international community. It also results in the "cut-off" being held hostage despite a resolution adopted by consensus at the last General Assembly of the United Nations. It is also disturbing in the medium and long term. Were this situation to be further prolonged, it would be bound to have a lasting effect on the image of the Conference on Disarmament, whose inability to pursue its mission would lead to a loss of credibility. It would also help to throw doubt on the value of the multilateral approach to disarmament and enhance the risk of a relapse into unilateralism.

A salutary jolt is needed. What should we avoid? We need to avoid making facile propaganda ploys and deploring failure as inevitable. What can we do? We need to seek ways and means of making realistic and balanced progress. This was what prompted the proposal by the United States, the United Kingdom and France which was presented on 20 May 1999 (CD/1586).

This leads me quite naturally to recapitulate the fundamental ideas which underpin our approach to disarmament and are translated into action in

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the Conference on Disarmament. This approach to disarmament is based on four fundamental ideas. The first idea, from which all the rest flows, is the legitimate right to security for all States. This is enshrined in the United Nations Charter, which recognizes the legitimate right of each State, large or small, to security, a universal right equal for all. Its corollary is that each State should in a sovereign manner define its legitimate needs with respect to defence and security, within the framework of existing treaties. It follows from this that disarmament, in all its aspects, can in no circumstances be determined in an arbitrary fashion by others than the State concerned or be implemented to the detriment of the fundamental security interests of that State.

The second idea is that disarmament must be achieved with the participation by all. This idea is twofold. It means, on the one hand, that negotiations on disarmament agreements must be conducted within an appropriate multilateral framework. In addition, it implies that those agreements should be implemented in a universal fashion. Its corollary is the pursuit of universality, an essential safeguard for the effectiveness of existing agreements, whether we are talking about the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty or the conventions for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction such as the Convention prohibiting chemical weapons.

The third of these ideas is that disarmament must be subject to monitoring by all. There can be no real disarmament without the existence of effective machinery for verification applied under international control. Its corollary is that, for instance, a convention as important as that prohibiting biological weapons, signed in 1972, needs to be supplemented by adequate verification arrangements.

The fourth and last of these ideas is that disarmament needs to be viewed in all its dimensions. The principle was laid down in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which spelled out the concept of general and complete disarmament. That quite obviously entails that disarmament cannot focus exclusively on one of its components to the detriment of all the others.

How are these fundamental ideas put into effect within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament? Today I will confine myself to the following two comments. The first comment concerns the agenda of the Conference. The Geneva forum will only fully discharge its principal negotiating task on the express condition that its members agree on a realistic and balanced agenda. Realistic, first of all, because it must constitute a point of equilibrium among the different concerns of the participants in the Conference. Balanced, also, because we hope that the agenda will vouchsafe appropriate treatment to conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Nothing would be more futile than to seek the means of disarmament on the basis of idle utopian dreams.

The second comment is concerned with nuclear disarmament. I will dwell somewhat longer on this owing to the sensitivity and topicality of the matter. If some here uphold the idea of a degree of constructive ambiguity in the

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field of nuclear disarmament, I am certainly going to disappoint them. This issue calls for the greatest possible clarity. I will avoid any form of bureaucratic jargon. Nothing could be more unworthy than to betray hopes by means of illusions.

So what can the Conference on Disarmament do in the field of nuclear disarmament? The reply is simple: negotiate the agreements which have been entrusted to it. It has done so in the past with the negotiations on the CTBT. It must do so in the future with the negotiations on the FMCT, the treaty to ban the production of fissile material. Everyone must agree that multilateral nuclear disarmament is a reality: the CTBT and the FMCT are the milestones on this path, the cornerstones. The former contributes to halting the qualitative development of nuclear weapons. The second will cap the quantitative development of fissile material used in nuclear weapons. The irreplaceable role of the Conference on Disarmament in negotiations on these two instruments has to be acknowledged.

But what is it that the CD is certainly not able to do in the field of nuclear disarmament? The reply is equally simple. Let us be clear: beyond this inventory of what is possible, we do not subscribe to the idea that the process of reducing nuclear arsenals would be more effectively advanced if negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament. Yet let us be honest enough to acknowledge the progress made in this field on the basis of bilateral and unilateral measures taken by the nuclear-weapon States. With respect to bilateral measures, the priority is to ratify Start II and begin negotiations on Start III as soon as possible. The contribution made by the Start process to reducing nuclear arsenals is well known. We must do nothing, in particular in the Conference on Disarmament, which might hinder or slow down this substantial progress. As for unilateral measures, the concept itself precludes their handling in a multilateral forum such as the Conference on Disarmament. I will conclude on this score by noting that, contrary to the argument which some seek to advance, the nuclear Powers are discharging their obligation under article VI of the NPT. Some countries might perhaps take an equal interest in reducing nuclear proliferation and the emergence of new nuclear capacities.

I will not recapitulate in detail the steps taken by my Government, the effects of which are spread out over several years. They were covered in a booklet widely distributed during the third Preparatory Committee for the NPT review conference last May, which is available to participants. I will confine myself to the most important features: a limited arsenal reduced to two components after the dismantling of the land-based nuclear component, a reduction in the nuclear military component of the defence budget, the detargeting of the nuclear elements of the French deterrent force, a final halt to nuclear testing and the closing down of the Pacific testing site, the dismantling of facilities for the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and assistance in the dismantling of Russian nuclear weapons.

Allow me to outline France's priorities both within the Conference on Disarmament and in the concentric circles which revolve around the Geneva nucleus. In the Conference on Disarmament, our priorities have not changed since the statement delivered by my predecessor on 26 February 1998. They are

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three in number. The first priority is to launch, as soon possible, the negotiations on the FMCT. The international community has turned to us in order that the Conference should begin negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We must now address this matter resolutely. Let us, however, clearly delimit the task which is before us. Our common ambition is to be found in the very terms of the mandate proposed in 1995 by Ambassador Shannon: "The Conference directs the ad hoc committee to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilaterally and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices". Non-discriminatory, since the purpose of the treaty is to extend to all States a legally binding undertaking to renounce the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Multilateral, insofar as this treaty negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament is by its nature intended to be universal. To single out the five nuclear-weapon States to negotiate between themselves such an instrument would therefore be inappropriate. Internationally and effectively verifiable, that is to say constructing a credible verification mechanism, relevant in terms of the scope of the treaty and its universal character. I do not wish as of now to go into the details of the elements making up my delegation's position. We will return to this in the course of the debates organized within the future ad hoc committee itself.

Our second priority is the prevention of an arms race in space. My delegation remains attached to the idea that the Conference on Disarmament should address this question. It is particularly encouraged to pursue this approach by the findings of the report by our colleague Ambassador Palihakkara, the Special Coordinator in 1998, on the one hand, and on the other the results of the resolution adopted on this subject during the last General Assembly of the United Nations. Clearly, this is one of the major challenges to which the international community must rise on the threshold of the next century.

Several recent developments testify to the importance of preventing an arms race in space: the ballistic missile test carried out by the North Korean authorities last summer and the statements concerning possible developments regarding the 1972 ABM Treaty, which we know is the cornerstone of the strategic balance and the process of reducing nuclear arsenals by the United States and the Russian Federation. In this difficult context one avenue beckons to us. It has to do with the search for confidence-building measures to foster international provisions to enhance the security, transparency and predictability of space activities. In this respect my delegation tabled a proposal in 1993 concerning notification of the launching of space objects and ballistic missiles. Up to 1995 the work of the Ad Hoc Committee reflected growing acceptance of this concept.

Our third priority is designed to see the Conference on Disarmament finally making a contribution to the campaign against anti-personnel mines. The international community adopted an exemplary instrument in the form of the Ottawa Convention. Beyond the role we played in its drafting, France is wholeheartedly involved in its implementation. It will complete the destruction of its own stockpiles before the end of 1999. In addition, France

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jointly chairs the inter-sessional working group on technologies for mine action. The work begun in Ottawa is far from over, however, since universal acceptance of this norm is regrettably not yet in prospect. France, which is convinced that an additional stage is possible, seeks re-establishment of the post of special coordinator in the hope that he or she will rapidly be able to identify conditions for negotiating a ban on transfers.

Beyond these three priorities, other topics come to mind with a view to appropriate handling by the Conference. On the other aspects of nuclear disarmament, on the one hand, we have proposed together with the United States and the United Kingdom a formulation designed to address the interests of the States most closely concerned, which seemed to us capable of mustering the agreement of all. We have also shown ourselves willing to work on the basis of other proposals, such as that presented by Belgium on behalf of five countries. Furthermore, if that is the general desire, my delegation is prepared to accept the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances. The fact that the Conference on Disarmament brings together States which are representative of the international community, particularly in those regions where the question of security assurances is most acute - I have in mind the Middle East and South Asia - means that it is the most appropriate forum to address this delicate subject if appropriate.

We would like to see the expansion of the Conference by a further five members. My delegation regrets that a consensus has so far failed to emerge on the package proposed by the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland. We would also like to see further consideration of ways of improving the Conference's methods of work.

We should also concern ourselves with what is taking place in our Conference's broader sphere of influence. I have two issues in mind: biological weapons and small arms. First of all, we need to conclude the negotiations on a protocol for verification of the 1972 Convention on Biological Weapons as soon as possible. As you know, France has for many years deplored the lack of verification machinery in this Convention. However, much remains to be done if we are to attain this objective before the fifth review conference of States parties, in 2001 at the latest. France intends to meet this challenge with the other States participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Group. To be credible, this instrument should be based on a set of indispensable complementary measures, combining a system of visits with declarations and the possibility of conducting investigations. The year 1999 will be crucial. We hope that by the end of the year significant progress can be made to enable the protocol to be adopted by a special conference of the States parties in the year 2000.

Lastly, special attention should be paid to small arms and light weapons, whose excessive accumulation and illegal traffic are a threat to peace and security in many regions of the world. My country's approach focuses in particular on prevention and a regional approach which is more immediately promising in terms of concrete results. In a more general perspective, it considers that the conference which is to meet in Geneva in 2001 will offer an opportunity to make significant progress in the monitoring and control of legal and illegal flows of such weapons.

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There are better things to do than to repeat the errors of the past, which have demonstrated the inapplicability of approaches which were unrealistic and served as pretexts for inaction. Rather than the easy path of headline-grabbing, seductive, hasty and ultimately utopian disarmament, we have always preferred the more demanding path of serene, practical, well thought-out and for that very reason realistic disarmament; that path is the only guarantee of the security of each State, large or small, and for that very reason an assurance of greater security for all.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of France for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, Ambassador Maimeskul.

Mr. MAIMESKUL (Ukraine): Mr. President, let me first of all express my sincere congratulations to you on your assumption of the honourable as well as responsible duties of CD President. The new cycle of Presidential rotation began with the presidency of Algeria and you have already demonstrated in a very convincing manner that despite continuing suspense, our body could succeed in starting substantial work on its agenda items. We pledge our full support and cooperation in your efforts to achieve this goal.

Our appreciation goes also to your predecessors in the Presidential Chair: Ambassador Grey of the United States of America, Ambassador Cedeño of Venezuela and Ambassador Nguyen Quy Binh of Viet Nam. We feel obliged to reiterate words of gratitude and respect to the CD Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and the CD secretariat. Let me also express warm words of farewell to Ambassador Zahran and convey to him and his family wishes for luck and every happiness. I would also like to thank Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General present here, for his continued attention to the work of this international body.

It has clearly been indicated in many statements delivered to the Conference on Disarmament during the second part of its annual session how sensitive and vulnerable the CD is to events which affect the international, regional and national security interests of its members.

One of these events has been the crisis in Kosovo. In their assessments of the situation in this region, so close to the Ukrainian border, the President of our State and its executive branch have been guided by the principles of impartiality and respect for the greatest of human rights - the right to live in peace and security, a rejection of violence and ethnic cleansing.

Based on this position, Ukraine was the first country to initiate, immediately after the start of military action in Yugoslavia, new attempts to find a diplomatic solution to the Kosovo crisis. The mediation initiative of the President of Ukraine, Mr. Leonid Kuchma, on the settlement of the Kosovo conflict was made public literally in its first hours, on 24 March. Two days later the delegation of Ukraine, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence, left for Belgrade to present in detail the Ukrainian initiative and propose its good offices in restoring peace in this region as a common value to all its inhabitants, irrespective of their ethnic

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origin. These our efforts were one of the contributions to the long diplomatic process which finally resulted in the Secur.ty Council resolution endorsing a peace plan for Kosovo. Ukraine, bearing additional economic hardships caused by the Yugoslavian crisis, wholeheartedly supports the peaceful settlement for Kosovo and notes with satisfaction that this result is due partly to Ukrainian efforts in that the United Nations Security Council resolution on Kosovo is also based on the relevant proposals of Ukraine.

We are aware that the comprehensive analysis of this conflict, its roots and its implications for the preservation of the international order based on the United Nations Charter, is still ahead. But I could not let pass in silence the fact that against the background of certain past and current developments, and in particular last year's nuclear explosions in South Asia, the continual six-year-long difficulties with the entry into force of START-2, the military means widely used to solve various regional conflicts, one could not but hear the concerns raised by the public and parliamentarians in various countries, including my own, that these events may only invigorate the visible trend to re-evaluate the validity of nuclear weapons and to attach greater importance to their possession. This trend obviously has a potential to increase the risk of further proliferation. Such a development is unacceptable to my country.

Much has already been said in this hall about the role played by Ukraine in achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We are committed to continuing advancement in this direction and firmly advocate the principles of the NPT regime both in the international arena and inside our country. We also appeal to politicians, diplomats and journalists not to take the denuclearization of Ukraine for granted. This process was very complicated from both the legal and technical perspectives and required a lot of resources and international assistance, so for us it seems disgraceful and unjust that in the context of mentioning countries which have abandoned their military nuclear programmes or forsworn nuclear weapons the name of our country is sometimes not even found. With all due respect for other countries which opted for non-nuclear-weapon status, it should be admitted that the elimination of the third largest nuclear arsenal at that time, inherited from the former Soviet Union and recognized as the property of Ukraine, represents a major achievement of the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as an important step in the nuclear arms reduction process.

Having adhered almost five years ago to the NPT, Ukraine participated for the first time in 1995 in the NPT Review and Extension Conference, which adopted among other documents the decision on principles and objectives in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. This decision, which is now frequently referred to as a "yardstick" for the implementation of the objectives in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, recognized that after the completion of the CTBT negotiations, the international community should pursue the early commencement and undelayed conclusion of the fissile material cut-off treaty. Needless to recall that the FMCT is a long-standing issue of the nuclear arms control agenda. Fifty years ago the ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons was supposed to be the real tool in preventing the nuclear arms race, which had been unleashed between the two antagonistic super-Powers. Since

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that time the international context has entirely changed. The "cold war", with its arms race, has ended, while large inventories of fissile material remain in stockpiles and in warheads dismantled in accordance with nuclear arms reduction treaties. This amount is so enormous that even the inexperienced observer might ask about the role to be played by the future FMCT in resolving the "existing stocks" issue. In recent publications, especially those of UNIDIR and the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) on the fissile material issue, the number of which has increased since the adoption of last year's 11 August decision to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a fissile material treaty, the issue of stocks, the scope of the future verification regime, etc. are being dealt with by renowned experts in the field. It seems that outside the CD several options for the FMT and its building blocks have already been identified and the task of diplomats is to find and follow, step by step, a track where the political objectives and expectations of their States will be adequately addressed. As the Conference has not resumed its negotiations on a fissile material production ban, one cannot prejudge the position of my delegation concerning each particular aspect of the future treaty.

At the same time, from our perspective, the future treaty should evolve from the following principles: the FMCT prohibits the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium for nuclear warheads and other explosive devices; the FMCT includes an effective verification regime for compliance with the above-mentioned prohibition, its crucial elements being: submission of initial declarations about production facilities, regular inspections of declared sites, challenge inspections to reveal eventual prohibited activities in undeclared facilities; in the framework of the FMCT, all uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing facilities are subject to initial declarations, irrespective of their present status. All facilities which use or store fissile material produced after the FMCT's entry into force are also subject to declarations; and lastly, the future verification regime does not impose additional obligations on non-nuclear-weapon States which have full-scope safeguard agreements with IAEA.

In pursuing the goal of the FMCT, it is essential to secure its role as an instrument in both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The Ukrainian delegation is very interested in finding an appropriate formula articulating these two intrinsically linked features of the future treaty.

While recognizing the FMT negotiations to be the major priority of CD work within item 1 of its agenda, we realize that other aspects of this item deserve our highest attention as well. "Attention" does not mean starting negotiations in the near future, all the more so as many have persuasively argued that except for the FMCT there is nothing ripe for negotiation at this stage. Having said this, I am nevertheless convinced that the CD has its undeniable role to play in promoting nuclear disarmament. The only question is how, keeping in mind that this role should be constructive and beneficial to all members of the international community. In this connection, I appreciate working document CD/1574, presented by Canada, which includes concrete topics deserving focused discussions in the CD, as well as concise and exhaustive arguments in favour of such discussions. To conduct deliberations on different aspects of nuclear disarmament, the CD needs to

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establish a subsidiary mechanism even if its mandate is a limited, exploratory one. In the current international context, the most suitable mechanism would be an ad hoc working group headed by one chairman, in course of at least one CD session. From my perspective as a former President of the CD, I am inclined more and more to consider the "Presidential troika" mechanism as a tool in resolving complicated procedural issues, such as the establishment of a subsidiary body, as exemplified by its activities last year, and not as suitable for the conduct of regular discussions on one concrete issue and its set of closely related aspects.

The issue of negative security assurances was intensively discussed last year within the framework of the relevant Ad Hoc Committee. The exchange of views between delegations revealed and articulated the organic relationship between the provisions enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. From Ukraine's point of view, the lack of an international multilateral legally binding agreement on NSA continues to be one of the serious drawbacks of the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime. Against the background of the devastating effects due to the use of conventional weapons, demonstrated to the whole world in recent years, it seems inconceivable that circumstances might push a nuclear-weapon State to use or even to threaten to use these weapons against NNWS. It also seems unlikely that nuclear deterrence could play a role in preventing the NNWS from possibly attacking or threatening NWS with chemical or biological weapons. These are only some of the focal points which could be extensively explored, if the Ad Hoc Committee on NSA is re-established during this annual session, a step we would certainly support.

Agenda item 3, "Prevention of the arms race in outer space", has acquired a new significance among CD member States in the light of certain events which occurred last year and plans to avoid the threat they may constitute. Moreover, the number of States with a capacity to launch missiles and place objects into space orbit is continually growing. Thus, preventive measures should be taken to assure that no weapons are placed in outer space. Achievement of this goal will not be easy, as not only weaponization, but also the militarization of outer space is perceived by many States as a threat to their security. Taking into account that no country voted against United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/76, which stated in particular that no country in the CD last year objected in principle to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on PAROS, it was reasonable to expect that the Conference would move forward in that direction. Therefore, our delegation is ready to support any proposal concerning the establishment of a subsidiary body or mechanism to deal with PAROS which could command CD consensus.

The host of problems created by the dissemination and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines continues to draw the attention of politicians, diplomats, humanitarian aid and health-care workers and NGOs. At the end of last year, amended Protocol II to the Inhumane Weapons Convention of 1980 entered into force and on 1 March this year, the Ottawa Convention became a part of the international law. Ukraine is actively involved in international endeavours aimed at eradicating this dangerous type of conventional weapon.

(Mr. Maimeskul, Ukraine)

Amended Protocol II, the so-called partial ban, has been submitted to the Verkhovna Rada (Diet) of Ukraine for its consideration and is expected to be ratified soon. Our country also signed on 24 February of this year the Ottawa Convention, thereby committing itself to the goal of the complete elimination of all existing APLs, stocked and in minefields, as well as never proceeding to their manufacture and transfer. In parallel, the Government of Ukraine has extended for a further four years the moratorium on the export of all types of anti-personnel landmines which was initially adopted in 1995. With this positive and promising record in efforts to achieve a ban on APLs, the Ukrainian delegation welcomes the fact that Geneva has been chosen as the venue for the inter-sessional work and annual meetings in the framework of the Ottawa Convention and for the annual conferences stipulated in amended Protocol II. These future activities are certainly a form of response to the mute appeal coming from the giant chair with one crippled leg erected on the Place des Nations to commemorate those killed, maimed or wounded by APLs. It is regrettable that despite the efforts of a large group of delegations and consultations by the Special Coordinator on APLs, the Conference as a whole does not show a willingness to elaborate at least intermediate steps to achieve a universal ban on APLs. Our delegation would be ready to support the reappointment of the Special Coordinator on APLs as well as of a Special Coordinator on transparency in armaments, to ensure a balance within the CD on nuclear and conventional arms control.

My survey of the tasks laid before the CD would be incomplete without expressing my delegation's consistent support for CD expansion, as proposed particularly in the report presented last year by the Special Coordinator on expansion, Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland. We assure our colleagues from Ireland, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia of our full support for their aspirations to become members of the Conference on Disarmament. This process should continue and include other applicants for CD membership as well.

Our colleagues, in statements delivered in recent plenaries, initially mentioned that the 1999 session of the CD had reached its chronological middle point, then crossed the middle point of the second part of the CD session, and now it is my turn to remind us that we are approaching the end of its second part. But the Conference has not adopted either a set of decisions on how to deal with each and every agenda item (which we used to call a comprehensive programme) or a decision on establishing one or two subsidiary bodies to deal with the issues where consensus exists, provided that purpose-oriented consultations on other items continue and intensify. In this context, Ukraine, as a member of the Eastern Group, would be happy if the positions of our four regional groups became identical; but, unfortunately, this is still not the case. For the time being, the Conference is obviously following the first of the three paths mentioned by Anne Anderson, the distinguished Ambassador of Ireland, in her statement of 27 May. In that time many delegations were becoming more and more inclined to having within the CD at least one subsidiary body, carrying out negotiations up to the end of this session. Among them were those who unambiguously favoured an approach based on the adoption of the comprehensive programme of work. At the same time,

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they advocated the need to continue intensive consultations on the agenda items where there was still no agreement in the Conference, such as nuclear disarmament and PAROS.

In that spirit, the delegations of Chile, Italy and Ukraine, in order to assist the presidency in its endeavours to find a practical compromise for the work of CD, submitted a relevant proposal to the President, which was circulated by the Group Coordinators to all delegations. The substance of that proposal and the reasons why the three delegations had introduced it were self-explanatory. We did not ask for this proposal to be registered as an official document, at least at that stage. Our interest was not to contribute to a further proliferation of proposals as to how the substantive work of the CD should be organized, or to see the names of our countries as the authors of one more CD official document, but rather to facilitate the search for a compromise. It is now to be hoped that common efforts by CD members, and still under your leadership, Mr. President, will lead us finally to a positive result.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Ukraine for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. We have now reached the end of the list of speakers. Are there any other delegations which would like to take the floor at this stage? The representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Ayewoh, has asked for the floor.

Mr. AYEWOH (Nigeria): Mr. President, please accept my very warm congratulations on your successful conduct of the affairs of the Conference on Disarmament since you assumed the position of President of the Conference. We are confident that, given your experience and untiring efforts, these will definitely contribute to breaking the current logjam in the adoption of the programme of work for 1999. Rest assured that my delegation will give you all the necessary support. I look forward to cooperating with you and other members of the Conference in advancing the cause of international peace and security. I also wish to take advantage of this occasion to pay tribute to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, as well as his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and the entire staff for facilitating the work of the Conference.

May I also seize this opportunity to commend your predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of Viet Nam, for the able manner he steered the affairs of the Conference during his tenure? My thanks also go to all my colleagues who have welcomed me warmly to this important forum. It is my expectation that we will have very close and productive working relations in the near future.

At this point, I would not fail to mention the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt, who is leaving us very shortly. It is rather unfortunate, if I may say so, that he is leaving Geneva at the time when I am just arriving. When we first met at Montego Bay earlier in the year, I thought that I would spend a longer time with him in order to take full advantage of his words of experience. However, I would like to take consolation in the fact that he is leaving us for greener pastures, and the Nigerian delegation wishes him every success in his future endeavours.

(Mr. Ayewoh, Nigeria)

It is a matter of great concern that the Conference on Disarmament, halfway into the 1999 session, has not been able to adopt its programme of work as a result of lack of consensus on nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS). May I comment briefly on these two issues that have been holding back progress on the work programme of the CD?

It is instructive to note that this lack of progress is not due to the absence of efforts or a dearth of proposals to end the needless gridlock. What is lacking is the requisite political will to translate these efforts into meaningful action.

I wish to affirm that our priority remains nuclear disarmament. It is my delegation's considered view that the "business-as-usual" attitude in some sections of the CD cannot contribute to confidence-building. Our appeal is that the 61 members of the CD should therefore be genuinely involved in facilitating the process for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament without further delay. My delegation however supports the proposal made by the Ambassador of Venezuela for the establishment of an ad hoc working group on nuclear disarmament if that will lead to some progress.

Let me place on record that we do recognize that important bilateral steps have been taken by the United States of America and the Russian Federation through the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks process to reduce their nuclear warheads. The Nigerian Government welcomed these steps and considered the actions encouraging. However, to achieve the common objective of this body, the pace of nuclear disarmament has to be accelerated and other nuclear-weapon States persuaded to recognize the need to join the process. The end result of the process should be a universally negotiated treaty that will ban the production, stockpiling and the use of nuclear weapons.

With regard to the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), recent developments have demonstrated the need for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on PAROS. We recognize the fact that outer space should be free of an arms race as a common heritage of mankind. We remain committed to efforts that will achieve this objective. We therefore support any mechanism that will prevent the weaponization of outer space.

Finally, there is no doubt in my mind at all that the challenges before the Conference in 1999 are enormous. We need courage, transparency and flexibility to meet these challenges. The Conference can make the difference between security for a few nations and peoples and security for all humanity, irrespective of nation, race and State.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and the words of friendship he addressed to me and to those who have preceded me in this post. Are there any further requests to take the floor? I see none. I shall now make some closing remarks.

Four weeks ago, when I took up the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament, I stated in my introductory remarks that our Conference is not designed to cope with deadlock in its work, still less with failure, and that

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while it is assuredly the receptacle into which events that occur outside Geneva flow in order to influence it, it can in its turn send positive signals towards the international community, that community which has entrusted it with a mandate, that of negotiating international disarmament instruments, which - forgive me my candour - it is not fulfilling at this moment. Today I can say that no signal has left the Conference and the movement of release so much desired by the Chair and all the members of this body has not taken place.

As I have already had occasion to say on many occasions, from the very beginning of its mandate the Chair embarked on consultations to ascertain the views of the various parties, and to assess, without any prior assumptions, the chances of success of the possible options which were available at that time. With reference to the statement made by our colleague de La Fortelle just now, who spoke of Utopia, I think that the Conference on Disarmament should not reject Utopia, because Utopia is first of all the domain of the possible.

These first consultations made it possible for me to reach four conclusions. Firstly, a keen and unanimous awareness of the need for the Conference on Disarmament to get its substantive work going without any delay. Secondly, the frustrating conclusion that what was possible in the CD at the beginning of its session, or even later on, was no longer sufficient to constitute a basis for compromise, in view of the implications of certain developments linked to certain aspects of international security and international relations. Thirdly, if the initiation of the work of the Conference on Disarmament is to enjoy better chances of success, it must involve the drawing up, on a basis of consensus, of a general work programme which is necessarily comprehensive and balanced and of course takes account of the interests and priorities of all the members of the Conference. This requirement was mentioned a number of times in the course of my bilateral consultations and also in the course of the Presidential consultations and reaffirmed in plenary meetings of the Conference. Fourthly, the Conference on Disarmament might well miss an additional opportunity to avoid deadlock if its members were to disperse on the occasion of the imminent inter-sessional break without reaching agreement on the work programme.

Proceeding from these observations, the Chair strove to construct patiently and progressively the foundations of a compromise on the two items of its work programme which remained pending, and which are still pending today, namely, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in space. The challenge was a simple one but a major one: how to bring the Conference to work on items already agreed by securing agreement on the items which are not yet agreed. I tried to translate into concrete terms what in my view appeared to constitute a possible basis for compromise.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, given the importance and the priority accorded to this matter, I sought to develop a balanced compromise based on the recognition that neither the troika mechanism, even if strengthened, or the establishment of an ad hoc committee, as proposed by the group of States known as the G.21, could win everyone's support. The mechanism I proposed - an ad hoc working group responsible for undertaking an

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exchange of views and information on the question of nuclear disarmament and exploring prospects which might help attain that objective - seemed to me to be a reasonable compromise which could meet with a favourable response from all delegations. I must confess that I was encouraged by most of the reactions I received to that proposal, and by the flexibility displayed by a number of delegations which, up to that time, had a settled position on the issue. I can now say that the ad hoc working group mechanism has been unanimously accepted, while the mandate, for its part, requires some further consultations.

With regard to the issue of preventing the arms race in space, the informal proposal which I submitted is aimed at the establishment of an ad hoc working group to examine and identify, by means of a general and substantive survey, the specific themes and proposals which could constitute the basis for an in-depth examination, including the aspects relating to possible confidence-building or transparency measures, to general principles and to treaty commitments, with a view to preventing the militarization of outer space. This proposal also takes account of the resolution which was overwhelmingly adopted, without any vote against and with only one abstention, by the last session of the United Nations General Assembly, and therefore took account also of the unanimous wish of the international community to see our Conference addressing the substance of this problem. It also takes into consideration the concerns of certain parties with respect to negotiations on this matter. So, the idea was to resume, within an appropriate body, a discussion which has already taken place in this forum in the recent past and which should be capable of opening up prospects for substantive examination of the concerns of the various parties without any prior assumptions. I was able to note that this option has so far won the support of a large majority of the members of the CD without, unfortunately, culminating in the consensus, which is essential for it to become operational. This is so both for the mechanism and for the mandate.

In the foregoing I have provided you with information on the two pending issues: nuclear disarmament and outer space. The effort which I initiated, as can be seen, basically meets the concern for a synthesis which is indispensable to clear the deadlock in our work. It needs to be supplemented by the effort made by all delegations to achieve convergence in order to succeed in identifying the framework for a balanced compromise which will enable us to begin our substantive work without any delay. It was submitted in the conviction that progress on one of the items would, through interaction, encourage progress on the second item and would thus open the door to the attainment and progressive construction of the compromise. This construction has already begun and has been partially attained. It has yet to be finalized once it has contributed to circumscribing qualitatively and quantitatively the factors of divergence. It is in fact the question of PAROS which has given a new shape to the priorities which are traditionally seen in the CD. This is understandable because we are aware in this forum that time is needed to take the necessary distance in order to better analyse, better assimilate and better understand developments, sometimes rapid, but whose direct or indirect impact on the international system of security and strategic stability opens up different prisms of analysis. Even if the

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construction of the consensus has only been partially attained, my feeling is that the Conference on Disarmament has never been so close to consensus since the beginning of the present session.

Today all of us together are obliged to recognize - and it is the President who must be the first to say so - that on the eve of the end of the second part of our session and with eight weeks before it concludes, the Conference still has to draw up its work programme and discharge this mandate which has been entrusted to it by, and for which it must answer to, the international community. We must not forget that sovereign States which are not members of the CD follow our work closely and wish to understand the reasons for our stagnation. Those States may judge us severely because they can highlight the fact that since the finalization of the CTBT, apart from the work conducted by our distinguished colleague Ambassador de Icaza on security assurances, the CD has not carried out any substantive work, still less any negotiations.

To these comments I would like to add a few observations prompted by these few weeks in the Chair. During the difficult moments in my consultations, I was mindful of the discussions which we all had under the guidance of our distinguished colleague from Chile, Ambassador Javier Illanes, who was then Special Coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the CD, and it is important that the members of the Conference, in their wisdom and their courage, should be able to address certain aspects of the functioning of this body. We must all agree and recognize that an item on the agenda of the Conference must be able to be examined, studied or negotiated in a subsidiary body if such is the general wish, consensus being there to provide the best guarantee that each delegation can make its views heard, defend them and protect the interests of its country where substance is concerned. Consensus, in this view, should lead to convergence and cannot be likened to a veto: it is a method of work designed to prompt member States to listen to each other, to negotiate in full awareness of interests which are sometimes, if not often, divergent, and to find formulas which meet the concerns of all. In substance, consensus is a means for reaching agreement and not a means for provoking or creating disagreement: if it is transformed into a veto, that means there is no desire for dialogue or negotiation.

The Algerian delegation has made use of all the means available to the Chair; it has spared no effort to perform its task in ensuring that it was working in the best possible conditions for the success of its task, by imposing on its efforts a sustained but moderate pace in order to enable delegations from time to time to carry out the necessary evaluations and to obtain appropriate instructions and by striving as far as possible to reconcile the imperatives of transparency and the requirements of negotiation. At the end of this term of office, it is up to each delegation to evaluate what has been achieved. Over these four weeks I have been able to observe and pay a very respectful tribute to the self-denial and professionalism of the delegations which have defended their positions. I have also noted the valuable and inestimable assistance which all the delegations never ceased to provide to the Chair in order to get the work of the CD going; I would like to convey to them here at the same time my gratitude but also my hope that the Argentine term in the Chair will succeed in making further progress with the

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effort that has been begun. I would also like to thank the group coordinators, the Ambassadors of France, Slovakia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Ambassador of China for all the assistance they have given me. My deepest and sincerest gratitude also goes to the secretariat staff, headed by Messrs. Petrovsky and Bensmail, a devoted, competent, professional, discreet and always available team. Before returning to Algeria's seat, from where I shall continue to participate as head of delegation in the construction of the necessary and essential consensuses, it remains to me only to pass the baton to the Argentine delegation, which I wish to assure here of my absolute readiness and full commitment to work alongside it, assuring my old friend Ambassador Guillermo González of my personal support and my constant readiness to assist.

As we have come to the end of our agenda, I would like to conclude by informing you that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 24 June 1999, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.829
24 June 1999

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 24 June 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Guillermo Enrique González (Argentina)

GE.99-62884 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 829th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for this meeting the representatives of Ecuador, India, the United Kingdom and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, before I call on the first speaker on my list, I should like to make a few remarks of a preliminary nature as Argentina takes over the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

I am fully aware that I am coming to this presidency by the inexorable drive of the alphabet. For all that it is no less of an honour and a responsibility for me and for the country I represent to be able to preside over the work of the only international forum dedicated to negotiating disarmament issues.

At the beginning of this term of office I wish to highlight the work done by my predecessors during the present session. Ambassadors Grey of the United States of America, Rodríguez Cedeño of Venezuela and Binh of Viet Nam did everything in their power to enable the Conference on Disarmament to begin its substantive work without delay. Special mention must be made of the endeavours of my immediate predecessor, Ambassador Mohamed-Salah Dembri. The masterly fashion in which he conducted the business of this body as the previous President made it possible, as he said himself at the end of his term, for the Conference to be closer today than ever to reaching agreement on a programme of work. Knowing the personal and professional qualities of the Permanent Representative of Algeria, I was sure that matters could not be otherwise. Ambassador Dembri, a long-standing colleague and friend, enjoys our wholehearted esteem and admiration. I have requested him, and he has been kind enough to agree, in the spirit of service for which he has always been noted, to continue to work and cooperate in all the activities of the Conference aimed at overcoming the prevailing difficulties.

After four Presidential terms, the Conference on Disarmament has before it proposals that cover every aspect of its agenda. At the same time, the consultations carried out by my predecessors have enabled me to come to this post with a fairly clear idea of delegations' positions. These elements bear witness to the continuity with which the Conference on Disarmament has been carrying out its work. I began consultations this week, starting from the point which they had reached during Ambassador Dembri's term of office, and I hope to continue with them. In the present circumstances, we have to remember that the political will of member States of the Conference is the only instrument that enables us to adopt decisions. The President of the Conference on Disarmament may, through consultations and any suggestions he may make, encourage and pave the way for consensus, but he can never replace the will of the parties. The agreement towards which we are working cannot be the responsibility of a single delegation or group of countries, or the President of the CD. Agreement has to be the outcome of concessions made by all parties, so as to arrive at a balanced solution that takes account of the interests of all members. Nor should the programme of work we are seeking be perceived as something imposed. It would be difficult for a programme adopted without conviction to meet with success at the implementation stage. I must

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also remind you that the expansion of the membership of the Conference, with the inclusion of the five new members proposed by the Special Coordinator, is also a decision that is pending before this Conference. I shall make every possible effort to finalize that matter.

The Conference on Disarmament is a body on which external events undoubtedly have a considerable influence. At the same time, what happens here sends a clear signal to the outside world. I sincerely believe that the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, and the subsequent initiation of consultations, studies and negotiations, would constitute a message of encouragement for the international community.

In taking the Chair I am aware that after this week we shall have the second annual break in the work of the Conference, two thirds of the annual meetings having taken place. I hope the recess that we will begin on Monday next will serve as a pause for thought. A useful time to enable the parties especially concerned by the topics still to be settled to reassess their positions and maintain contacts with one another. We require and need more activity. Naturally from the Chair we shall do everything possible, and a little more, to strive to promote such a dialogue and achieve a positive outcome of this term of office.

I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the first speaker on my list, Ambassador Luis Gallegos-Chiriboga of Ecuador.

Mr. GALLEGOS-CHIRIBOGA (Ecuador) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I would like to convey to you, first of all, my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you preside over the work of the Conference on Disarmament at its current session. I am convinced that your extensive experience and capabilities will promote progress in our work. The delegation of Ecuador offers you maximum cooperation in your delicate and important responsibilities. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Presidents who have preceded you in this difficult post and have demonstrated notable devotion to the tasks of the Conference. Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference, and his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, as well as all the staff of the secretariat, for their readiness to help and their assistance.

The Conference on Disarmament is an organ of the international community whose objective is multilateral negotiations on disarmament, which constitutes one of the cornerstones of the collective security system. This philosophy of international relations is an intrinsic feature of the United Nations and calls for our participation and action in matters which are of concern to all mankind. The current session of the Conference on Disarmament will be the last to be held this century. The symbolic significance of the year 2000 is an additional opportunity for the ongoing search for world peace, on the basis of policies inspired by the ethical and moral responsibility of States. All peoples without distinction seek peace and the elimination of all types of weapons, but most particularly they seek to see disarmament giving priority to the instruments of mass destruction. The world of the twentieth century has seen the most significant technological progress, just as it has generated the

(Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, Ecuador)

most bloody events in the history of mankind. As the century draws to an end, the tensions of war and peace still persist on the planet. The factors which give rise to armed conflicts and sustain them are a sad reality of the present day: there are conflicts still to be resolved and huge arsenals ready for destructive use.

The difficulties in giving momentum to practical negotiations on disarmament reveal a lack of agreement on the global agenda and substantive action in terms of security in the post-cold-war world. The fact that it is impossible to achieve consensus reflects the insecurities of a world which has not yet determined the new outlines of the new international order or brought its operation into line with the realities of the present. It gives the impression that we still do not attach true historic significance to what occurred 10 years ago, when the Berlin Wall came down, and that the world is faced with a new political paradigm without a clear idea of its dangers and opportunities. The end of the cold war finds us still caught up in conflict and mistrust: we must move forward in studying the factors which promote them with the aim of constructing a modus vivendi of peace, progress and development for all nations. The words of the Agenda for Development are very appropriate for the purposes of this Conference, because they call for the reduction of excessive military expenditure, so as to permit the earmarking of additional resources for economic and social development.

Ecuador agrees with the majority of the community of States concerning the importance which should be attached to the issue of nuclear disarmament on the international agenda. My country has always been committed to this priority, which was officially laid down at the first special session of the General Assembly in 1978. Nuclear disarmament is a matter for, and the responsibility of, everyone, and this leads us to welcome the bilateral and other efforts made to promote progress in this regard. Ecuador supports and will always provide its backing to any effort directed towards complete nuclear disarmament, this being an objective which will be facilitated by a system of non-proliferation that is effective and addresses the security interests of all States. On this issue, I would like to emphasize Ecuador's approval of the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of 8 July 1996, as a country committed to the cause and advancement of international law. The ICJ laid down that the obligation to pursue and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects is not subordinated to general and complete disarmament; and that this obligation falls on all States. We should remember that the General Assembly of the United Nations requested this advisory opinion, which, while it does not have a binding character, does constitute an input to the formation and development of international law.

My country believes that multilateral and bilateral efforts to promote nuclear disarmament should complement one another and should strengthen a permanent dynamic. These two paths of action should maintain their rate of advance. In this regard, Ecuador shares the concern expressed on many occasions by members of the international community as to the lack of progress in the process of ratifying START II and the delay in beginning the negotiations on START III. My country welcomes the recent contacts between

(Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, Ecuador)

Russia and the United States to reactivate the process which should lead to the signing of START III. We predict that concrete understandings will be reached very soon on this important matter.

Where multilateral efforts to promote disarmament are concerned, Ecuador supports the aims of nuclear non-proliferation. Ecuador shares the view that the international non-proliferation regime should be preserved, its credibility re-established and its future assured. We therefore believe it is appropriate to embark on the multilateral negotiation of understandings which will consolidate various aspects relating to curbing the development of atomic weapons. This is the case for the signing of a treaty on fissile material. In 1998 the CD agreed to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosives. General Assembly resolution 53/77 I, which was adopted without a vote, calls on the CD "to re-establish [its] ad hoc committee at the beginning of its 1999 session". My delegation believes there are bases for a consensus which could lead us to negotiations on this matter, which, if it were to result in a treaty, would make a special contribution to the international non-proliferation regime.

Negative security assurances, meaning a commitment by States which possess nuclear weapons not to use them, nor to threaten to use them against countries which do not have such weapons, should be universalized by means of an international regime. The declarations by States which possess such weapons and have renounced their use against those who do not have such weapons are very positive. Such declarations are noteworthy and for my country are legally binding in the terms in which the scope of these unilateral acts are materialized in international law. However, Ecuador believes that they cannot in the long term be a substitute for a multilateral instrument adopted following a process of negotiations with formal provisions for compliance.

From the strategic subject of nuclear disarmament I now move on to another whose humanitarian consequences have aroused universal awareness of its importance on the United Nations disarmament agenda. Ecuador welcomes the progress made with regard to the elimination of anti-personnel mines, particularly the Ottawa Convention and Protocol II to the 1981 Convention on Conventional Weapons (1996). My country signed the Ottawa Convention in December 1998 and deposited its instrument of ratification in April this year. We should also note the resolution adopted within the Organization of American States, which establishes the objective of making the American continent a zone free of anti-personnel mines. In this same region, another important development in this respect stems from the action taken by various countries to ensure that Central America is free of mines of this sort by the year 2000. Ecuador agrees with the view that this is the most appropriate time to begin preparatory work for the second conference which will review the 1981 Convention, and which must be held by the year 2001 at the latest. In this respect I would like to note that a decision was taken at the Maputo meeting that the preparatory meetings of expert committees should be held in Geneva and that the second meeting of States parties should be held in the year 2000 in this same city.

(Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, Ecuador)

The subject of anti-personnel mines and their elimination is of particular interest for my country. After the signing of the peace agreement in October 1998, Ecuador and Peru agreed to remove and destroy all anti-personnel mines which were placed along their frontier. We are sure that the international community will cooperate in the demining programme drawn up by the two countries. On behalf of Ecuador, I would like to extend in advance our gratitude to the countries and organizations which have made and announced their contributions to this cause.

Allow me to refer very particularly to certain specific aspects of disarmament which are a focus for the attention of this Conference and the expectations of the international community. The entry into force of the Convention on Chemical Weapons, the constant increase in the number of States parties and the operation of the Organization set up to verify the application of its provisions is a significant step which has won deserved recognition from the international community. My country also welcomes the prospects for the strengthening of the chemical disarmament regime. We believe this example should be followed in the matter of biological weapons. We share the view that there is an urgent need to take all necessary steps to avoid the proliferation and use of biological weapons. This priority has been recognized by States through the commitment to conclude the drafting of a protocol before the Fifth Review Conference of the 1972 Convention which is due to meet by the year 2001 at the latest.

As is well known, various countries in my region, including Ecuador, have signed and ratified the Inter-American Convention against the Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. The subject of illegal transfers of conventional weapons is a problem which aggravates violence in all parts of the world, in particular where there are outstanding disputes or long-standing conflicts. Given the international dimension of these problems and their serious implications for the security of huge areas of the planet, the delegation of Ecuador believes it is important to study how the CD might apply its technical capabilities and its role as a rallying point with a view to establishing a regime which would deal with the subject of the illicit transfer of conventional weapons. The conference to be held in Geneva before the year 2001 would offer an opportunity to make significant progress on this matter.

In 1967 the international community agreed on the principles which should govern States in their exploration and use of outer space. Where disarmament is concerned, the treaty stipulates that activities of States should be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes. The space treaty prohibits the placing in orbit around the Earth of nuclear weapons or any kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Thirty years of unprecedented technological progress have occurred since then, and a growing number of States are capable of placing objects in space. Ecuador believes that the military applications of space need to be studied in order to avoid the beginning of an arms race, which would be contrary to the provisions of the treaty and to the principles of the security of peoples. In this regard, my

(Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, Ecuador)

country notes the legal obligation of all States to comply strictly with the provisions of the 1967 treaty, particularly with regard to the exclusively peaceful use of outer space. Noting that no country voted against General Assembly resolution 53/76, Ecuador is confident that there are positive elements which will facilitate the building of the necessary consensus in this regard.

Before concluding my statement, I must refer to the proposal submitted to the CD in February 1999, for the admission of Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Tunisia and Ecuador as members of the forum. The proposal was the result of broad consultations conducted in 1997 and 1998 by Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, who presented a report where Ecuador figures among a group of five new members of the CD. Almost 15 years have passed since the presentation of my country's request to become a member of the Conference on Disarmament. In those 15 years my country has distinguished itself by always seeking to reconcile different positions in the interests of international peace and security. We are all aware, as another country stated at one stage, of the public and private history of this delay. The CD is a negotiating body where disagreements and different viewpoints can and surely must exist. But this is the essence of democracy. As cooperation in the pursuit of common objectives is vital for democracy. The CD needs to agree on its programme of work for 1999. It is our desire, shared by the five States mentioned earlier, that the adoption of this programme should be accompanied by a decision on the admission of the five new members. In this way the CD will recognize the intense efforts undertaken in 1997 and 1998. We hope that there will be a favourable decision on this matter in the immediate future. Of course, the Conference will also have to agree on the appointment of a new special coordinator to conduct consultations on future expansion following the admission of the five. Once it is a member of the CD, Ecuador will cooperate with the forum on the basis of the principles of its foreign policy and its commitment to the cause of disarmament. As soon as it is admitted to the CD, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Ecuador will seek to participate in the G-21, and to support and contribute to the work of this Conference.

To conclude, I would like to thank the members of the Conference on Disarmament who, by an overwhelming majority, supported Ecuador's membership. My appreciation for the public and private views expressed on behalf of the people, Government and delegation of Ecuador. I express my hope for the continuous and successful progress of the work of our Conference. There are few forums such as this whose decisions have so much influence over the lives and well-being of hundreds of millions of human beings and their families. The success of the CD will ultimately benefit not the States which contribute to its work but the peoples who reap the benefits of the peace and security of nations.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Ecuador for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the distinguished representative of India, Ambassador Savitri Kunadi.

Ms. KUNADI (India): Mr. President, in extending to you our congratulations on the assumption of the presidency, allow me to express our deep satisfaction at seeing you, a representative of a country with which India enjoys warm and friendly relations, presiding over our deliberations. We would wish to place on record our appreciation to Ambassador Dembri of Algeria for his outstanding efforts as President of this Conference. Our appreciation also to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of this Conference, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, the Deputy Secretary-General, and the secretariat for their assistance and support. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Zahran of Egypt, who will be leaving Geneva shortly. This Conference will remember him for his invaluable contributions bringing to bear his vast years of experience based on the unique wisdom of the great country that he so ably represented. We wish him well. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Amorim of Brazil and Ambassador Ayewoh of Nigeria, who have recently joined us.

My delegation has requested the floor to set out its views on the continuing inability of the CD to get down to substantive negotiations through the adoption of its programme of work. We express our deep disappointment at the current situation. We feel it is essential to dwell at some length on the reasons for the current impasse.

When the CD commenced its annual session in January this year there was an expectation that following the adoption of the agenda, agreement would soon follow on its programme of work. The agenda of the CD reflects a consensus among its members. This consensus should find reflection in a programme of work that contains all the elements of the CD agenda. But this has not happened.

India supported the proposal submitted by the Group of 21 on a programme of work contained in CD/1570. The Group arrived at this proposal after much internal deliberation and it represented a contribution by the Group to carry forward the work of the Conference. India also took note of the proposal contained in CD/1566 submitted by the Ambassador of the United States of America as the President of the CD following his consultations and representing his views on the CD's programme of work.

Between these two proposals for the programme of work - that is, CD/1570 and CD/1566 - we had on the table common elements which were readily apparent and on these there was no opposition from any delegation. These related to the establishment of ad hoc committees on fissile materials and NSAs and the reappointment of special coordinators on APLs and TIA as well as on the reappointment of special coordinators on review of the agenda, expansion of membership, and the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. It is important to note that the outstanding issues on which the CD needed to find common ground were only two - nuclear disarmament and outer space. That was the position in January and it is so now, six months later.

India shared the widespread sentiment in the CD that it was important to preserve these common elements while at the same time exploring ways and means of intensifying consultations on those elements - these being on nuclear

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disarmament and on outer space - on which consensus still eluded the Conference. We supported the position shared by several others that there was need for a full exchange of views through the utilization of all the means of consultations that have been provided for in the rules of procedure.

As the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, the Conference has an important functional role to discharge to meet the expectations of the international community. We must do everything that is possible to meet that expectation. But in cases where the Conference has not been able to commence negotiations on a specific item on its agenda, it is incumbent on the members to persist with efforts to find consensus, which, for this multilateral body negotiating matters concerning the national security of its member States, is its life-sustaining mechanism. We believe that the rules of procedure provide ample room for such consensus-building measures, provided of course that there is a willingness on the part of all backed by the necessary will to engage in a process of consultation and dialogue with the aim of finding consensus. At the same time, it is important that decisions of the CD are within the framework provided for in the rules of procedure.

The Group of 21 proposed in CD/1570, under agenda item 1, an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material. India joined the consensus resolution 53/77 I on this issue in the last General Assembly. We, therefore, have had no difficulty in going along with the re-establishment of this ad hoc committee this year.

Under agenda item 1, the Group of 21 also proposed in CD/1570 an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. In CD/1571, the Group of 21 submitted a mandate for this ad hoc committee. In submitting these proposals, the Group of 21 was reiterating its principled position on the highest priority it attached to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament under agenda item 1.

India has also taken careful note of proposals made this year on agenda item 1 by several delegations - South Africa, Egypt, Canada and a joint proposal by Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway. It was noteworthy that the desire to see some forward movement on nuclear disarmament was widespread, cutting across groups. It was left to the Conference to translate that sentiment into decisions to enable the commencement of actual negotiations. In craiting a programme of work that captured the sentiment that was so widely shared in the CD it was equally important for us to recognize that the mechanism of the Troika consultations, as contained in paragraph 1 of CD/1501 of last year, had not measured up to the expectations of the Conference and a more productive mechanism was therefore needed.

It may be recalled that paragraph 50 for the Final Document of SSOD-1 sets out guidelines for the CD to provide an effective and complementary process in the multilateral framework with regard to the substance of agenda item 1, namely, the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. While keeping this yardstick in view, we remain willing to consider, as a measure of flexibility, all proposals made by delegations with

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the aim of carrying forward work on the substantive aspects of agenda item 1. It is in this context that India joined the Group of 21 in supporting the proposal for an ad hoc working group proposed in CD/1575 by the Ambassador of Venezuela as President of the CD.

It is important that we seek common elements with a view to substantive negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the near future. In this context, we wish to place on record our deep appreciation to Ambassador Dembri of Algeria for his diligent and tireless efforts as President of this Conference to explore all avenues for progress on nuclear disarmament. We have noted that as a result of the intensive consultations conducted by him, he was in a position to state in the last plenary that there was no delegation that was opposed to an ad hoc working group on nuclear disarmament, though a mandate required further consultations. We hope that a CD decision on establishing an ad hoc working group will be a stepping stone for future work in the Conference for negotiations on nuclear disarmament. This clearly shows the constructive approach taken by us in order to find a way out of our present impasse.

We support the position taken by the Group of 21 on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on PAROS. We believe that this proposal has widespread support in the CD, generated no doubt by concerns regarding current developments in ballistic missile defences leading to space becoming an integral dimension of warfare. The creditable work done by the Special Coordinator on PAROS, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, last year and the developments in the First Committee, where the adoption of resolution 53/76 on outer space, which we had the privilege to co-sponsor, took place without a vote, gave reason for hope that it would be possible to establish an ad hoc committee this year as part of the programme of work. Again we have been disappointed, though last year no delegation was opposed in principle to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on PAROS. We support the intensification of consultations to reach agreement on a mechanism, with an appropriate mandate, that measures up to the aspirations of the international community that urgent negotiations be undertaken for ensuring the non-weaponization of outer space.

The current impasse in efforts to establish the CD's programme of work is related to the inflexible positions of a few delegations that have prevented agreement being reached on the two outstanding issues, nuclear disarmament and outer space. In this context, there have been proposals to seek the decision of the Conference on one or two elements on the programme of work. This artificial separation of the elements of work and attempts to give them automatic annual extensions is unprecedented in the CD, and is not provided for in the rules of procedure. To describe these proposals as interim does not make them any more acceptable. The automatic renewal of subsidiary bodies is unacceptable as it divorces the work of the CD from the overall reality in which that work is undertaken.

The CD is not an island and cannot pretend to be one. It acts as a mirror of the prevailing international security situation reflecting its trends, both positive and negative. The international disarmament agenda is

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under strain, the dimensions of which can be judged by the stalling of the bilateral arms reduction process. The expectations raised by the end of the cold war of deep, sustainable and irreversible reductions in nuclear arsenals leading to their elimination have come, a decade later, to be well and truly belied. Nuclear dangers, including through the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, have only increased. International concern about these dangers was demonstrated by the support extended by the General Assembly to the resolution on "Reducing nuclear danger" tabled by India. We would also like to highlight the request made by the General Assembly to the CD in resolution 53/78 D, co-sponsored by several delegations, including India, to commence negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

We are all aware that the success of negotiations in the CD depends to a large measure on the common recognition by delegations that the disarmament measures they negotiate are global and non-discriminatory and will therefore enhance their security. The quest for a unilateral security advantage for a few States goes contrary to the spirit that can sustain the negotiation and completion of credible disarmament instruments by this Conference. Surely, when individual States or groupings of States assert the right to exclusive standards of national security at the expense of the security of all others, this does not constitute a measure that promotes the realization of the international disarmament agenda.

Mr. President, let me conclude by reiterating my delegations's readiness to extend to you all possible support in your efforts to find consensus on a comprehensive programme of work with elements that meet the agreement of all delegations in this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of India for her statement and for her kind words concerning both myself and the bonds of friendship between our peoples. I give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Ian Soutar.

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, may I first of all congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference and assure you of the fullest support and cooperation of my delegation as you undertake this vital role at this particularly challenging time? I should also like to pay tribute to the efforts of your immediate predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria, Ambassador Dembri, who spared no efforts in his attempt to steer the Conference to agreement on its programme of work. I hope very much that you will be able to rely on his wise counsel as you take up the baton.

On 27 May, the Director of the International Security at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office addressed the Conference, setting out the United Kingdom's non-proliferation and disarmament priorities. Among them, he mentioned our commitment to a responsible and transparent policy on legal transfers of small arms and to the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

Earlier this year, the United Kingdom published its first Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls. The United Kingdom wishes to draw the attention of members of the Conference to the report, which is published jointly by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Defence. Copies of the report are being made available to members of the Conference.

The report is in three parts. Part I sets out the United Kingdom's policy on export control issues at both the national and international levels; part II gives details of export licencing decisions taken between 2 May and 31 December 1997, including descriptions of which goods were licensed for export to which countries; and finally, part III gives details of actual exports from the United Kingdom in 1997, including values of arms exports to each country. We will publish the second Annual Report, covering exports and export licensing decisions in 1998, later this year.

We believe the publication of the Annual Report marks a step change in the level of transparency about the United Kingdom's export licensing policy. We have never before disclosed on a country-by-country basis this level of detail of equipment licensed for export, or physically exported from the United Kingdom. It puts the United Kingdom in the vanguard of arms-exporting countries in terms of transparency.

The Annual Report forms only one part of the United Kingdom's commitment to manage our arms exports in a responsible and transparent manner, and to encourage other countries to do likewise. Although greater transparency is not an end in itself, it can play a crucial role in promoting common understanding between arms-exporting countries of the pros and cons of certain transfers; increasing accountability, especially where Governments have made specific commitments on the regulation of arms exports; and building confidence between arms-importing States. Inter-State transparency can be just as important in fulfilling these purposes as public disclosure of information.

In this context, the United Kingdom emphasizes its continuing strong support for the role played by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as the main international instrument for disclosure of information about arms transfers and holdings. It is encouraging that participation in the Register continues gradually to increase, and that there have also been incremental improvements in the quality of the information provided, with increasing numbers of countries giving details of weapons types and models.

A key development in relation to inter-State transparency was the adoption in June 1998, during the United Kingdom presidency of the European Union, of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. The detailed criteria in the Code, against which all EU member States have agreed to assess arms exports licence applications, are underpinned by an information-sharing and consultation mechanism. This mechanism is the first of its kind to be applied by a group of countries to their conventional arms exports. Besides

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

allowing member States to exchange views on the application of the criteria in specific cases, the Code has also promoted constructive discussion on wider export control issues.

Another important forum for inter-State transparency is the Wassenaar Arrangement for Export Controls on Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies. This arrangement has the potential to make a valuable contribution to international peace and stability by promoting responsibility in conventional arms transfers. As outlined in part I of the Annual Report, the United Kingdom has been at the forefront of efforts to increase the amount of information exchanged between participating States in the Arrangement. We will continue to work for the evolution of the Arrangement during the 1999 assessment of its operation.

The United Kingdom invites members of the Conference on Disarmament to take note of these developments and, where appropriate, to publish detailed reports on their own exports of arms and military equipment; participate in the United Nations Arms Register and work for an increase in the number of countries providing information as well as a broadening of the information exchanged; and subscribe to the principles of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and consider the scope for similar arrangements in other regions.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his statement and kind words. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ambassador Ri Tcheul, now has the floor.

Mr. RI Tcheul (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (translated from French): Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. Given your abilities, which I noted when you were Ambassador in Berne, I am sure that you will perform your task with success. I should also like to thank the Algerian Ambassador, Mohamed-Salah Dembri, for his major contribution to developing a compromise on the programme of work.

I wish to begin by touching on some matters relating to nuclear disarmament as well as to space weapons which remain unresolved despite the endeavours of many member States. As Coordinator of the Group of 21, my delegation has had an opportunity to consult many members of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly those of the Group of 21 on these matters. In relation to nuclear disarmament, the success or failure of our efforts to break out of the present deadlock hinge completely on the fact that all member States regard nuclear disarmament as a universal concern and that every country recognizes that it has a legitimate right to take part freely in the nuclear disarmament process. To refuse open and transparent discussion of ways and means with all the countries concerned is an indication of a lack of willingness to abandon nuclear weapons entirely. All member States of the Conference on Disarmament have a legitimate right to discuss this matter without any restriction, because nuclear weapons are a common danger.

The continuing development of nuclear weapon capabilities places every country in the world within reach of nuclear weapons. The potential threat of

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nuclear weapons has even become more imminent because of some elements contained in the "strategic concept" that was very recently announced. This new concept indicates that nuclear weapons must be improved and could be used to settle political problems such as ethnic conflicts. The idea that nuclear weapons could be used as a means of protecting members of a military alliance is a declaration of nuclear proliferation. It runs counter to the burning desire of humankind for peace, security and similarly for a world free of nuclear weapons. We cannot leave such an important issue as that of nuclear disarmament in the hands of one or two nuclear Powers. It is a natural right of every member country to take part in discussions concerning nuclear disarmament since this is a question directly related to the interests and the survival of each and every one of us. There can be no excuse for ignoring such a sovereign right.

Without the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, it will be impossible to prevent high-handedness on the international scene, and weak countries will always remain victims of power politics. As last week's Herald Tribune pointed out, world leaders note that the United States has once again obtained what it wanted in Kosovo, thanks to cruise missiles and its nuclear arsenal. This use of nuclear weapons and the air campaign against Yugoslavia, carried out with no regard for the United Nations, show that no country is safe from such interference.

The present situation in the Korean peninsula is a great source of concern. Using the incident that happened last week as a pretext, a large American military fleet is massing in the Korean peninsula. The aircraft carrier Kittyhawk, having completed its mission in Yugoslavia, is heading for the Korean peninsula. The American troops stationed in South Korea are backed up by AC-130 planes and multipurpose FA-18 combat aircraft, followed by 12 F-15 aircraft and several thousand military personnel. American forces based in Japan, including the aircraft carrier Constellation and B-52 strategic bombers, are awaiting orders. Furthermore, the United States intends to send to South Korea RC-135 aircraft, EA-6B reconnaissance aircraft, AWACS and nuclear submarines of the Los Angeles and Aegis type. These military deployments, coinciding with many recent acts of provocation at sea, seriously threaten us because these irresponsible acts could be followed up by fresh military activity in another part of our planet.

In a desire for peace and security, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is ready to ensure that anyone touching its territory will pay a very high price. Since the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is under constant threat of nuclear weapons, it holds to its position of principle that all nuclear weapons must be destroyed as quickly as possible. It calls for the establishment of an ad hoc committee or some other appropriate mechanism with the specific task of building a world without nuclear weapons. The treaty banning fissile material must include a system for monitoring materials loaded into nuclear warheads and those which are stockpiled. This is the only way to ensure that the treaty contributes to nuclear disarmament.

I should like to raise the issue of space weapons. I think we could apply to this question the saying: "Prevention is better than cure", whose

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meaning seems simple but very profound. At a time when we are arduously striving to eliminate nuclear weapons, a dreadful scourge which originated decades ago, we now face another danger, that of the emergence of a new threat with incalculable consequences. If space weapons are developed and if they are deployed, a new kind of arms race would ensue, heightening the nuclear threat. A country or countries deploying space weapons could demand a treaty prohibiting the fresh deployment of space weapons by others in order to dominate space. Concern is growing on this subject.

It is certain that the development of space weaponry would ineluctably lead to a new arms race. The emergence of the anti-ballistic missile defence programme is a more obvious threat from space weaponry. The country with the largest nuclear arsenal in the world, with its powerful military forces, and another country which was the first victim of the nuclear bomb, are jointly developing this dreadful system. While this dangerous action has been undertaken under the cover of defence, nobody is so naive as to believe that. It is nothing other than an offensive weapon system designed to maintain military supremacy and impose their will on others. The arms race may force the new generation to live, not under the sun and the stars, but under the constant threat of monstrous weaponry. My delegation considers that all attempts to arm space and to develop anti-missile defence systems must be thwarted in time, and that in order to do so an ad hoc committee must be set up on the prohibition of the deployment of space weapons. This is the only balanced compromise capable of securing consensus.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This led to the closure of the list of speakers, but I see that there are other delegations which have asked to take the floor. The representative of Germany, Ambassador Seibert, has the floor.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): I have requested the floor not to offer a general statement but to make a comment at the end of the second part of this year's session. Let me first congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of the presidency of this Conference at this crucial juncture. We fully trust in your diplomatic skills and wisdom to guide our work forward. You can count on the full support of the German delegation in proceeding in the way you have set out in your introductory statement. At the same time, I would like to thank your predecessors for all their efforts to reach a consensus that would allow this Conference to get down to work at last. I want to thank, in particular, your immediate predecessor, Ambassador Dembri of Algeria, for his broad and very intensive consultations and the valuable informal proposals he has circulated on the two outstanding issues. These proposals - let me call them the "Dembri proposals" for short - have brought us very close to success. I fully share the evaluation that the Conference has moved closer to a consensus - perhaps closer than at any other time during this year's session. It is important to maintain this momentum.

I would thus like to encourage you, Mr. President, to continue on the course you have charted today. I strongly believe that on the basis of the Dembri proposals, possibly with some minor modifications, it should be

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

possible to achieve consensus in this Conference in the near future. If consensus should not yet be possible in the last few days of this part of our session, then we should at least aim at an agreement at the very outset of the next part, if we do not wish to see the Conference end another session, its third session, without having undertaken any real negotiations. Even if we are able to reach consensus soon, there will still be only limited time left for substantive work. The best we can hope to achieve this year is to create a solid foundation for the immediate commencement of fruitful negotiations next year. The success of our efforts this year will, therefore, not be judged at the end of the session, it will be judged in January of next year, when we either resume the negotiations where we left off this year or we enter into a new round of futile discussions on a programme of work. If we were to repeat the extremely dismal precedent of this year, if decisions reached by this Conference after months of difficult deliberations should turn out once again to be relevant for only a few weeks, then the role of this Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament would be seriously damaged.

Mr. President, another matter that is long overdue is a decision on a limited expansion of the membership of the Conference as proposed by Ambassador Hofer last year. I hope that you will be able to obtain agreement also on this question, so that we can, finally, welcome Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia in our midst.

Mr. President, I wish you all success in your difficult task at this decisive moment and I appeal to all delegations to support your efforts in a spirit of compromise and cooperation.

May I take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues in this Conference, Ambassadors Amorim of Brazil and Ayewoh of Nigeria? My delegation is looking forward to cooperating with them. Finally, I would also like to express my best wishes to Ambassador Zahran of Egypt, who will be leaving Geneva shortly. We wish him well.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and his good wishes. The representative of the Republic of Korea has the floor.

Mr. KIM (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I congratulate you, first of all, on your assumption of this important duty and assure you of the fullest support of my delegation in discharging your responsibility. My delegation also commends the tireless efforts of the former President, Ambassador Dembri of Algeria, in seeking a solution to the current impasse on the programme of work.

My delegation did not plan to take the floor today. However, after listening to the statement by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who stated that there had been an act of provocation last week against North Korea off the west coast of the Korean peninsula, I find myself obliged to respond to it in order to prevent my colleagues and the delegations present in this Conference hall from being misled.

(Mr. Kim, Republic of Korea)

I do not believe that the Conference on Disarmament is the relevant forum for dealing with this sort of issue. Such an issue should be discussed and resolved directly between the two parties concerned.

Not only for this particular incident of last week, but also for any topic regarding inter-Korean relations, the Republic of Korea has consistently requested that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sit together with us and participate in dialogue in an effort to seek solutions.

The incident in question last week began with continued intrusions across the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the West Sea of the peninsula by North Korean warships and fishing boats. The intrusion started on 7 June and was repeated until 15 June. Some intrusions were as deep as 3 nautical miles south of the NLL.

During these 10 days, the naval forces of the Republic of Korea patiently but persistently warned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea not to cross the Northern Limit Line, which has existed for many decades, and has been acknowledged by both sides.

The Government of the Republic of Korea is determined to pursue its policy of engagement with North Korea with the utmost perseverance. Our policy, however, will be firmly based on strong and vigilant defence against any threat to peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Ri Thae Gun, has the floor.

Mr. RI Thae Gun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I had not any intention of spoiling this meeting, which is purely dedicated to discussing the disarmament issue, which is very important to everyone and to mankind. The only thing I would like to mention here is that what we said is based on reality and the truth. So I am not going to make any counter-arguments to the statement made by my South Korean colleague. I would only like to read one sentence of text from the Armistice Agreement signed in 1953 between the United States General and our side, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. According to the agreement, paragraph B of article 13 of the Armistice Agreement stipulates that only five islands shall be under the military control of the United Nations forces out of the isles located in the West Sea of Korea, north and west of the boundary line between South Hwanghae province and Kyonggi province. This clearly indicates that the above five islands are located in our own territorial waters and that there is no mention of the boundaries clearly dividing the control area between both parts. The incident which has occurred is purely staged in the territorial waters of North Korea.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Thank you. The information shared with the Conference is noted. The representative of the United States, Ambassador Grey, has the floor.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): I had not planned to speak today, Mr. President, but let me first express my pleasure that the alphabet has put you in charge during this crucial time, and let me also thank Ambassador Dembri for his hard work, which I am sure will continue to be of value to you.

Just very briefly, without getting into a debate, I would like to associate myself with the remarks made by my Korean ally.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the United States. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? If not, I think this concludes our business for today, and the second part of our annual session.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 29 July 1999, at 10 a.m. You may be sure that, during this inter-sessional period, we shall endeavour to keep up the momentum from previous Presidential terms and try to make the maximum possible progress in our work. It remains only for me to take leave of you with a single word: In sha' Allah!

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.830
29 July 1999

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 29 July 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Guillermo Enrique González (Argentina)

GE.99-65275 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 830th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and the third part of the meetings for 1999.

All members of the Conference on Disarmament were deeply saddened to learn of the death of His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco last Friday. During his reign of almost four decades, King Hassan II guided his country towards stability and prosperity. His legacy will be that of a leader who brought his people into the modern age while at the same time upholding the traditional values of Islam as only great statesmen can. King Hassan II combined vision with pragmatism to establish a bridge of understanding and cooperation in the Middle East and between the Arab world, Europe and the rest of the world. I should like to ask Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco to convey to the family of King Hassan II and the Government and people of Morocco the sincere condolences of the members of the Conference on Disarmament.

I now invite the Conference on Disarmament to observe a minute of silence in homage to His Majesty the late King Hassan II of Morocco.

. . .

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I now call on the coordinator of the Group of 21, Ambassador Savitri Kunadi of India.

Ms. KUNADI (India): I take the floor on behalf of the members of the Group of 21 to express our deep shock and grief at the sudden passing away of His Majesty King Hassan II of the Kingdom of Morocco.

His Majesty's far-sighted leadership for the progress and prosperity of his country won him the admiration of people the world over. He played a catalytic role in ushering in regional and international peace. The world has lost a great statesman with the demise of His Majesty King Hassan II.

On behalf of the Group of 21, I would like to convey through the delegation of Morocco our deep condolences to the Government and people of Morocco on this sad occasion.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): I take the floor on behalf of the delegation of the Western Group and should like to express our profound sympathy to the Government and the people of Morocco on the passing away of His Majesty King Hassan II. Throughout nearly four decades of his reign, King Hassan II acquired a high reputation as a man of peace and vision who made both a lasting contribution to his own nation and to international peace efforts. I would be grateful to Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi for conveying our sincere condolences to his authorities.

Mr. MIKHNEVICH (Belarus) (translated from Russian): On behalf of the Eastern European Group I would like to express sincere condolences to the delegation of Morocco in the Conference on Disarmament, specifically to Ambassador Nacer Benjelloun-Touimi and through him to the Moroccan people as a

(Mr. Mikhnevich, Belarus)

whole on the death of King Hassan II of Morocco. I am sure that the name of King Hassan II and the deeds which glorified his country will remain for ever in the history and the memory of the peoples of Morocco and other countries. I trust that the people of Morocco will endure with fortitude the ordeal that has befallen them and fittingly pursue all the efforts embarked on by King Hassan II towards the goals of prosperity and peace.

Mr. WANG (China) (translated from Chinese): On 23 July King Hassan II, who was respected by the entire world, passed away due to illness. King Hassan was a great pioneer for the national independence and liberation of Morocco, a leader loved by the Moroccan people, and had an important influence in the world. During his lifetime King Hassan paid great attention to developing friendly relations and cooperation with China and maintained profound friendship with several generations of Chinese leaders. His death was a great loss for the Moroccan people and also deprived the Chinese people of a respected friend. The Chinese delegation would like to express our deep condolences to the Moroccan delegation and to the people of Morocco.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of China. Does any other delegation wish to speak in this connection? I call on Ambassador Nacer Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from Arabic): The Moroccan delegation was greatly moved by your kind address, Mr. President, on behalf of this body and thanks you for offering your condolences to the Moroccan delegation and all Moroccans at this difficult time following the death of King Hassan II. We were similarly moved by the words of condolence offered by the representatives of the different groups of this Conference in sharing our deep sadness. In sharing the sadness of the people of Morocco following the loss of the King, you have all spoken in memory of his tremendous abilities and moral qualities and of the great pioneering role which he played throughout his life and during his leadership with his fellow heads of State in the quest for international peace and security. My delegation would like to thank you all very much and express our gratitude and appreciation for the noble position which you have all adopted, and for the minute of silence which you set aside in memory of our late King.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Morocco for his words. I should like to welcome the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Olexandre Chalyi, who will be the first speaker this morning. I also have on my list of speakers the representatives of Brazil, South Africa and Finland. I invite the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Olexandre Chalyi, to take the floor.

Mr. CHALYI (Ukraine): Mr. President, at the outset, let me congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the important and distinguished duties of CD President. All the more so, I am delighted to see in the Presidential Chair the representative of Argentina, the country with a renowned record of nuclear non-proliferation. On behalf of the Ukrainian delegation, I pledge our full support and cooperation in your activity to steer the work of the

(Mr. Chalyi, Ukraine)

Conference out of its continued impasse. I also avail myself of this opportunity to express words of appreciation to your predecessors, Ambassador Robert Grey Jr. of the United States of America, Ambassador Victor Rodríguez Cedeño of Venezuela, Ambassador Nguyen Quy Binh of Viet Nam and Ambassador Mohamed-Salah Dembri of Algeria, who spared no effort to establish the basis for the substantive work of the CD this year.

My profound respect goes as well to the CD Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and the CD secretariat. Finally, I would like to welcome the Ambassadors, heads of delegation, who have recently joined this unique arms control and disarmament negotiation body.

Although this is the first time I have the privilege to deliver a statement at a CD plenary meeting, my knowledge of the CD's record of recent accomplishments prompts me to remind you that almost one year ago the Conference adopted an important decision to negotiate a fissile material treaty in the framework of an ad hoc committee under agenda item 1. We are very pleased and proud that this decision was adopted by the Conference under the presidency of our country, and Ambassador Mykola Maimeskul deserves gratitude for and recognition of his work done well in the Presidential Chair. After the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for the CD to re-establish in 1999 this ad hoc committee, the prospects for resuming negotiations this year seemed promising and bright. Nevertheless, at the end of the summer period of 1999 the Conference on Disarmament had still not adopted a set of decisions on how to deal with its various agenda items. Regrettably, none of the four drafts of the so-called comprehensive programme of work has succeeded in commanding consensus at the Conference. Several times it has been proposed to start substantive work on one or a few particular issues where consensus has already been established, but the Conference as a whole has not been attracted to such an intermediate, partial approach. Therefore, the members of the Conference should continue their efforts to find a compromise on two controversial issues: the mandates of the CD mechanisms to deal with the general aspects of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The package of two proposals concerning these issues elaborated during the Algerian presidency provides an appropriate basis for seeking a solution. So we call on all parties who are particularly sensitive to the formats and modalities of dealing with ND and PAROS to do their best and modify, if necessary, their respective positions with regard to the issues concerned. The continuation of the deadlock in the CD is intolerable and I dare say that the delegations which have realistic, moderate, middle-ground-oriented positions on both issues are losing interest in further brokerage between parties who maintain rigid stances.

Despite the continuous uncertainty at the Conference, I would not like to be too pessimistic and would recall that the CD has demonstrated to the international community valid proof of its credibility in the past. By saying this I am referring, of course, to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

(Mr. Chalyi, Ukraine)

As far as the CWC is concerned, it is well known that Ukraine has signed and subsequently ratified this milestone treaty which should now be implemented by the international community. It goes without saying that the Chemical Weapons Convention's successful implementation depends on national implementation measures by each and every State party to the Convention.

In this connection, I would like to dwell on the national implementation of the Convention in our country. The relevant decisions made by the President and the Government of Ukraine have created the necessary basis for complete and responsible compliance with international obligations under the CWC. Shortly after the CWC's entry into force for Ukraine, a 10-year programme for the implementation of the CWC was adopted by the President of our country. This programme creates the necessary preconditions for wide-scale and long-term work for the more than 20 Ukrainian ministries and governmental bodies involved. For the time being, the National Authority of Ukraine continues to work on extension of the penal legislation of Ukraine to any activity prohibited under the Convention.

It is with great pleasure that I would like to inform you of another very important event that is going to take place in Ukraine at the beginning of August. With OPCW secretariat assistance, the National Authority of Ukraine will hold a national training course for representatives of the chemical industry.

Since May, Ukraine has been a member of the Executive Council of OPCW. Undoubtedly, our country will contribute to strengthening the Executive Council's role in promoting the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and compliance with it. We do believe that a strong and effective Executive Council is essential for the achievement of the objectives of the Convention.

Another fundamental international legal instrument elaborated by the CD is the CTBT, a treaty which was a long-sought objective of the international community and which is supposed to block any further qualitative development of nuclear weapons.

Given Ukraine's well-known contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament it is needless to repeat that we have no intention of developing and testing nuclear weapons.

Ukraine therefore considers the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as an important part of the international legal base which is to contribute to the progress of a real nuclear disarmament process. It is logical that we are interested in the earliest entry into force of the Treaty and are prepared to do everything possible in order to achieve the ratification of the Treaty by the Ukrainian Parliament before the first Conference of the member States of the CTBT. Nowadays, the documents that are necessary for ratification are in the Ukrainian Parliament's Committees and in the near future will be passed to it for its consideration. At the same time, I would underscore that in the Ukrainian population there is a growing feeling, shared by a wide range of political forces, that particular

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responsibility for the future of the CTBT lies with the nuclear-weapon States. Furthermore, in the light of some recently adopted resolutions by the Verkhovna Rada, the Ukrainian Parliament, the issue of CTBT ratification by Ukraine will acquire a significant internal policy dimension.

In this respect, Ukraine calls on those nuclear-weapon States which have not yet ratified it to do so without further delay, on the understanding that prospects for nuclear disarmament largely depend on their political will. The ratification of the CTBT by all five nuclear-weapon States being critical for its entry into force, however, should not overshadow the urgency of the signing of this international instrument by all those States included in annex II to the Treaty whose signatures are still missing.

We are all confident that the active participation of member States in the work of the CTBTO PrepCom will contribute to the effective implementation of the provisions of the Treaty. Ukraine, in turn, is making every possible effort in this field. In this connection, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that Ukraine's seismic station Malyn has been included in the International Monitoring System. This station has been examined by the Provisional Technical Secretariat staff and as a result of the survey an agreement between the PTS and the Ukrainian side related to the modernization of the station has been reached.

My survey of the multilateral arms control treaties would be incomplete without mentioning the importance which Ukraine attaches to the conclusion of the negotiations on the verification protocol to the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons. We are satisfied that this document will include procedures to investigate non-compliance with the provisions of the BTWC. But more emphasis should be given to measures aimed at preventing BTWC violations. We therefore attach great importance to the establishment of control over quantities of microbial or other biological agents and toxins which can provide reliable justification for their use only in protective or other peaceful purposes. The delegation of Ukraine has submitted several proposals in this respect for the attention of the Ad Hoc Group. We encourage other delegations to pay more attention to this problem.

I would now like to dwell upon some other issues of arms control and disarmament which are more or less related to the CD agenda and which, in my opinion, also affect the course of your negotiations.

In formulating its position in the field of strategic arms, Ukraine proceeds from the understanding that participation in all the treaties in the sphere of strategic security concluded by the former USSR and the United States of America meets its national interests. These are the ABM Treaty, the INF Treaty and the START-I Treaty.

The Government of Ukraine attaches the greatest importance to the ABM Treaty and abides by strengthening its viability and effectiveness in the future.

(Mr. Chalyi, Ukraine)

The Ukrainian side proceeds from the position that under present conditions, the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms of 31 July 1991 can be effective and viable only if all the parties strictly comply with the provisions of the ABM Treaty. We call upon both sides to refrain from any unilateral actions which are inconsistent with the provisions of the ABM Treaty or which can negatively affect the viability of START-I or the subsequent fate of START-II.

Ukraine believes that each party to the ABM Treaty has the right to make its own assessment of existing threats to its national territory and to elaborate a programme of actions in order to deter this threat. However, possible actions taken by any party to this Treaty in order to deter the threat of limited missile attack from any State with the potential to launch such an attack should not contradict the Treaty obligations. We believe that consideration of any amendments to the ABM Treaty is impossible until the issue of treaty succession is finally resolved and until the procedural mechanism defined in the new regulations of the Special Consultative Commission is enacted. We can understand the particular domestic political difficulties of the other parties and are prepared to be flexible. At the same time, however, our position remains unchanged - the problem of succession to the ABM Treaty is a top priority today and must be fully resolved in the near future. In this connection, we endorse the recent United States/Russia summit, the results of which we regard as optimistic for reaching important solutions for further progress in nuclear arms reduction and strategic security and stability.

Ukraine is well ahead of the strategic arms elimination schedule provided for in article II of START-I. Overall, 64 per cent of the strategic arms delivery vehicles previously deployed on the territory of Ukraine have now been eliminated. We highly appreciate the aid rendered by the United States to facilitate this process in the framework of the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) programme.

However, Ukraine is facing enormous problems in this process, both political and economic. We are considering the possibility of more effective and economic ways of eliminating the strategic weapons which remain deployed on the territory of Ukraine.

It is our expectation that this issue will be resolved, thus enabling further progress in nuclear disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament, which was conceived to be a unique multilateral disarmament negotiation body, is now going through difficult times. In my view, all delegations, without exception, would lose and nobody would win if the Conference continues to be at an impasse. We should not allow such an unfavourable development. So let me again call on all delegations to show their utmost flexibility during the remainder of this year's session and to ensure the undelayed resumption of negotiations at the next session.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for his important statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Celso Amorim.

Mr. AMORIM (Brazil) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first of all allow me to congratulate you warmly on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. We are pleased to see the Permanent Representative of Argentina, Brazil's sister nation and partner, on the podium. I am sure that your acknowledged diplomatic abilities and experience will guarantee that you will successfully follow up the praiseworthy efforts of your predecessor, Ambassador Dembri of Algeria. My delegation will provide full support and cooperation to you in discharging your major responsibilities.

(continued in French)

Although you, Mr. President, and the Ambassador of India as the Coordinator of the Group of 21 have already spoken on behalf of all of us, I cannot let the opportunity pass to express my personal sorrow and that of my country at the passing of His Majesty King Hassan II. I had the privilege to be granted a private audience by His Majesty when I was my country's Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the occasion of the Casablanca Conference in 1994. I was personally able to appreciate the extent of his knowledge of and interest in international problems, well beyond his country and his region.

(continued in English)

I have asked for the floor today, on behalf of my delegation and that of the United States of America, to draw the attention of the Conference on Disarmament to the approval on 7 June, at the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions.

Brazil, together with the United States, was one of the sponsors of this initiative and co-chaired with the United States delegation the Working Group that was established in 1997 and 1998 to discuss and later elaborate a Convention related to transparency and confidence-building measures in the Americas.

Concerted and collective efforts were in fact required to conclude this agreement in such a short period of time. That would not have been possible without a true convergence of interests to contribute to regional transparency and trust, as well as a solid commitment to further consolidate the peaceful security environment prevailing in our hemisphere.

We acknowledge with great satisfaction that the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions has already been signed by the following OAS members: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.

(Mr. Amorim, Brazil)

As was the case with the 1997 Convention on Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, the recently concluded Convention is another pioneering undertaking by the Americas in conventional-arms-related issues.

The Inter-American Convention renders obligatory the annual reporting of information on States parties' imports and exports of conventional weapons covered by the United Nations Arms Register, i.e., battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large-calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships and missile and missile launchers.

In addition, the Convention requires that States parties notify acquisitions, either through imports or national production, of conventional weapons in those seven categories, on a case-by-case basis. Notifications shall be submitted to the depositary no later than 90 days after the incorporation of such weapons into the inventory of the armed forces.

The Inter-American Convention indeed reflects a genuine desire in the Americas to strengthen regional peace and security by setting a new transparency norm. It undoubtedly sets an example which will hopefully inspire similar initiatives by other regions of the world, thereby contributing to a more stable international order.

To conclude, Mr. President, I call your attention to a letter dated today which requests that the text of the Inter-American Convention be circulated as an official document of the CD.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his statement and for his words of friendship and support. I take note at the same time of the request for circulation as an official document of the Conference of the text of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions. It shall be done. I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa, Ambassador Sipho George Nene.

Mr. NENE (South Africa): Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of the fullest support and cooperation of the South African delegation. I would also like to express our deep appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Dembri of Algeria, who worked with great energy and diligence to advance our work in the CD.

It is regrettable that many months have gone by without the CD being able to adopt a programme of work. It is in part a reflection of certain structural shortcomings of the CD and the manner in which we conduct our work. There is an obvious need for transparency, reform of procedure and further democratization. However, no amount of change will aid progress in the CD if the political will to undertake substantive work and negotiations is not prevalent. External factors have always played a significant role in how the CD reacts to situations that impinge on or alter the international security situation. Events in 1998 marked a major setback and challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime while other events this year have

(Mr. Nene, South Africa)

further eroded the international climate. Nevertheless, my delegation remains convinced that the basic elements of our work in the Conference can be positively resolved and that we can start substantive work in the not too distant future.

It is with this in mind that I have requested the floor today to outline some elements South Africa regards as politically achievable and technically feasible in obtaining an effective, credible and workable fissile material treaty that would reinforce the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. South Africa has, since taking our seat in this Conference, been a strong proponent of the achievement of a fissile material treaty and our preparations for the negotiations are in an advanced stage. Our delegation will introduce a comprehensive working paper once substantive negotiations have started.

In achieving the ideals of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty - namely to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, to achieve the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to achieve nuclear disarmament - control over nuclear-weapons materials and the cessation of their production for weapons purposes would be important steps in the complex political and technical process of nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons may range in sophistication from fission weapons to boosted weapons, thermonuclear weapons, fission-fusion-fission weapons and enhanced radiation weapons. All require certain specialized materials for their construction. Ceasing the production of such materials could lead to a quantitative capping of the number of weapons in existence and to laying the foundation for their eventual complete elimination.

South Africa has used the following considerations as a starting point in developing some thoughts on the possible scope and requirements of a fissile material treaty (FMT). The FMT would have to be a genuine disarmament measure and not purely address non-proliferation. Along with the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, an FMT would be important in complementing and reinforcing the NPT, which is the principal motivating treaty with respect to the ideal of nuclear disarmament.

For the above reason, the issue of existing stocks would have to be addressed. For practical and political reasons, the declaration of historically produced stocks of weapons materials by all States with nuclear weapons is not believed to be feasible. Materials already declared as excess could however be included as a starting point or "baseline" at entry into force of the FMT for a given State with nuclear weapons.

The continued use of weapons-grade material in naval military reactors will require special consideration. Due to the classified nature of HEU fuel, it will most probably be manufactured from material regarded as being outside the FMT and not from material declared as excess.

A primary focus of the FMT should be to stop the further production of nuclear materials from which nuclear explosives can be made. Using the term "fissile material" in a generic sense for these weapons materials could cause

(Mr. Nene, South Africa)

misunderstanding - in a technical sense, "fissile material" has different definitions. A common understanding will have to be agreed for the use of the term.

Tritium is not a fissile material and the need for it will, in practice, only disappear to the extent that nuclear disarmament undertakings reach their final objective. However, due to the closure of certain production reactors, the possibility of the production of tritium in commercial civil reactors, for military explosive use, should be avoided.

Viewed from this perspective the FMT could capture in an irreversible way weapons material declared as excess in an ongoing process; prevent altogether or regulate the further production of weapons-grade materials for legitimate uses such as fuel for research reactors, naval reactors, etc.; make "closed-down" production and associated facilities subject to verification to prevent their reuse for weapons purposes.

For the effective verification of the material included within the scope of the FMT a system comprising two components is foreseen: a component suitably adapted to weapons-grade material which has been declared as excess and placed under the supervision of the verification organization while this material is still in a sensitive geometrical and compositional form; and a component, which could be similar to current IAEA safeguards, dealing with the following: materials once they have been reworked into non-sensitive forms; production of materials for non-proscribed military uses allowed by the Treaty; and facilities which had previously produced fissile material for nuclear explosive purposes so as to verify and monitor their "closed-down" status or continued use for peaceful purposes.

If under "stocks" the past production of weapons-grade material is understood, then there are both political and practical reasons why a full or complete declaration of such stocks as a requirement of the FMT could be problematic in the negotiations for the treaty as well as for its subsequent implementation. Of the nuclear-weapon States, the United States has been the most transparent in declaring past production of weapons-grade plutonium. However, in doing so, a problem of great practical significance was also revealed, that is to say, the fact that no account could be given of about 2,800 kg of plutonium - enough to manufacture several hundred nuclear weapons. The practical significance of declaring stocks with such a large discrepancy in completeness is therefore questionable. This is a practical problem which was also experienced in the case of South Africa. During the "completeness investigation" in South Africa by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the existence of a completeness discrepancy could only be accepted on the strength of other supporting data - that is, other than nuclear materials accounting - such as operational records, electricity consumption, reports on chemical losses, etc. Considering that South Africa produced a relatively small quantity of highly enriched uranium over a period of about 15 years, the practical problem of giving an accurate production figure for tens and hundreds of tons of material produced over half a century would present significant practical problems. Declaration of nuclear material in weapons or directly associated with nuclear weapons without the ability to verify the declaration which will be made would therefore not contribute to confidence-building in a meaningful way.

(Mr. Nene, South Africa)

The FMT could thus address weapons material which has been transferred from military use to peaceful nuclear activities, declared as excess. This excess material would be included in a starting inventory of a State upon entry into force of the FMT and would be subject to the verification machinery provided for in the treaty. Further material declared as excess in the future would continuously be added to the starting inventory in an irreversible way.

Standards for security from theft and sabotage, as well as safety to ensure no harm to health and the environment, would also have to be considered. Increased transparency and declarations of historical production on a voluntary basis would increase confidence and could be seen as a political gesture of goodwill although the practical difficulties regarding completeness will need to be acknowledged.

I hope these initial elements will contribute to the debate on a fissile material treaty and provide delegations with a basis for further consideration of these issues once substantive negotiations commence.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Many thanks to the representative of South Africa for his important contribution. The representative of Finland, Ambassador Reimaa, now has the floor.

Mr. REIMAA (Finland): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you best success in your important work. On behalf of the delegation of Finland, I would also like to extend my warmest welcome to all the new colleagues who have started in the CD this summer.

As this last part of the 1999 session of the CD is beginning, let me assure you that we support your efforts to come to an agreement on a programme of work. At the same time, we would like to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Dembri, and all the previous Presidents for their efforts on this difficult issue.

The delegation of Finland regrets that in spite of those serious efforts we are starting the third part of this year's session of the Conference without a programme of work. This situation is a matter of grave concern to us. With this and in view of the earlier expectations that the Conference would get down to practical work, the Conference on Disarmament is facing a critical moment.

Your predecessor, Ambassador Dembri, left on the table a comprehensive proposal on the programme of work, which came very close to a consensus. In our view, in the present situation, a substantive and comprehensive programme of work is the most realistic alternative for an agreement - substantive and comprehensive, because there are more than just one important issue to be discussed or negotiated.

We hope that the outstanding problems involving nuclear disarmament and outer space can soon be solved in order to have an agreement on the programme of work. Since there is not much time left in this session, it would be

(Mr. Reimaa, Finland)

important and perhaps even helpful to reach understanding in principle that the same programme would be followed when the CD starts its next year's session in January 2000.

While underlining the priority of the FMCT negotiations for my country, Finland also sees the value of the other items in the work programme proposal, such as anti-personnel landmines, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Nuclear disarmament remains a matter of prime importance to the entire international community and it deserves appropriate attention also at the Conference on Disarmament. To advance consideration under agenda item 1 of the Conference, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway tabled a proposal to set up an ad hoc working group to study ways and means of establishing an exchange of information and views within the Conference on endeavours towards nuclear disarmament. To our delegation, this proposal seems to offer one realistic possibility to move forward, and noting the positive signals given, we would certainly welcome early agreement on this issue.

In this context, I would add that regarding nuclear arms reductions, Finland considers the START process as the most practical way to achieve concrete results - that is, further significant reductions of nuclear arsenals - at this point.

Finland welcomes the intention declared by president Clinton and President Yeltsin in their meeting in Cologne in June 1999 to move towards START III negotiations. The subsequent Joint Statement in Washington by Vice-President Gore and Prime Minister Stepashin two days ago to begin discussions on START III strengthens prospects for the continuation of nuclear disarmament. We hope that these developments will soon lead to the entry into force of the START II Treaty and to the opening of negotiations and conclusion of the START III Treaty, as already outlined at the Helsinki summit in March 1997. We also note with interest the comments made by the United States of America and the Russian Federation in their joint statement of 20 June, and the follow-up by Vice-President Gore and Prime Minister Stepashin, on initiating further discussions on the ABM treaty. We hope that these steps will consolidate the trend of the past decade where confrontation has been replaced by cooperation.

After the agreement by the CD in August 1998, it is evident that the negotiations on an FMCT are the most useful and tangible contribution that the CD can make to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. While recognizing that there are other important issues for the CD to tackle, starting negotiations on an FMCT is a key issue for the work of the Conference.

This is a matter where consensus has clearly been registered. In 1998 the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously welcomed this decision and encouraged the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish this ad hoc committee at the beginning of the 1999 session. At the last meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the importance of

(Mr. Reimaa, Finland)

such negotiations was highlighted by many. During this year's session of the CD, the consensus on FMCT established last year has not been called into question.

An FMCT would irreversibly limit the fissile material stockpiles available for use for nuclear weapons purposes. Such a treaty, capping fissile material production and containing an effective international verification system, would further strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and would contribute to the efforts to further reduce nuclear arsenals. We should grasp the opportunity that we have in front of us and commence swiftly negotiations on such a treaty.

Before I conclude, let me touch upon the issue of CD expansion. We hope that the Conference will finally take a positive decision on the proposal made last year by the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, to expand the CD by five countries - Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia. We would see this as one more important step in the continuing process of CD expansion.

Mr. TANTOH (Cameroon): Mr. President, my delegation wishes to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the CD and wishes furthermore to assure you of our constant support throughout your tenure of office. This delegation also joins the groups which have spoken before it to express its sympathy to the Moroccan people at the death of His Majesty King Hassan II.

My delegation has asked for the floor this morning to inform this assembly that Cameroon's National Assembly deliberated on and the President of the Republic signed into law two weeks ago the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines. The instruments of Cameroon's ratification of this Convention will be deposited at the appropriate quarters in the coming weeks.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Cameroon for his statement. We take note of the information which you have been kind enough to share with us today.

We have started the third and last part of our annual session. During the inter-sessional period I made contact with a number of delegations and groups of delegations, bilaterally and multilaterally, with a view to reaching agreement on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament. I intend to continue all types of consultations during the whole of the coming week, and I sincerely trust that I will be able to get a clearer idea of the situation in which we find ourselves, and also to see, together, where we are going and how we can achieve the common objective which I am sure is shared by all the members of the Conference.

That concludes our work for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 5 August 1999, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.